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EXECUTIVE SESSION

PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

INTERVIEW OF: WALID PHARES

Friday, December 8, 2017

Washington, D.C.

The interview in the above matter was held in Room HVC-304, the Capitol, commencing at 11:15 a.m.

Present: Representatives Schiff and Heck.

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Appearances:

For the PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
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██████████ Good morning. This is an unclassified transcribed interview of Walid Phares.

Thank you for speaking with us today.

For the record, I am ████████ a majority staff member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Before we begin, I have a security reminder. I just want to make sure that you and your counsel have left your electronics outside.

MR. SOCARRAS: Correct.

██████████ I also want to state a few things for the record.

The questioning will be conducted by members and/or staff during the allotted time period. Some questions may seem basic, but that is because we need to clearly establish facts and understand the situation. Please do not assume we know any facts you have previously disclosed as part of any other investigation or review.

We ask that you give complete and fulsome replies to questions, based on your best recollection. If a question is unclear or if you are uncertain in your response, please let us know. And if you do not know the answer to a question or cannot remember, simply say so.

During the course of this interview, we will take any breaks that you desire.

This interview is being transcribed. There is a reporter making a record of these proceedings so we can easily consult a written compilation of your answers.

Because the reporter cannot record gestures, we ask that you answer verbally. If you forget to do this, you might be reminded to do so. You may also be asked to spell certain terms or unusual phrases.

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Also, please use the microphone when speaking. A green light indicates that the microphone is on.

You are entitled to have a lawyer present for this interview, though you are not required to do so. I see that you have counsel present and would ask your attorney to make an appearance for the record.

MR. SOCARRAS: My name is Michael Socarras, and I represent Dr. Walid Phares.

I wanted to confirm the terms of the interview. I understand that the interview will be confidential, that it will not be released outside the committee, and that Dr. Phares will have the opportunity to review the transcript for any errors before it is finalized. Is that correct?

[REDACTED] Yes. And I'll address the review momentarily.

MR. SOCARRAS: Thank you.

[REDACTED] To ensure confidentiality, we ask that you do not discuss this interview with anyone other than your attorney. Consistent with the committee's rules of procedure, you and your counsel, if you wish, will have a reasonable opportunity to inspect the transcript of this interview in order to determine whether your answers were correctly transcribed. The transcript will remain in the committee's custody.

The committee also reserves the right to request your return for additional questions, should the need arise.

The process for today's interview is as follows. The minority will be given 45 minutes to ask questions. Then the majority will be given 45 minutes to ask questions.

Immediately thereafter, we will take a short break if you wish, after which

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the minority will be given 15 minutes to ask questions and the majority will be given 15 minutes. We will then proceed in 15-minute rounds until questioning is completed.

These time limits will be strictly adhered to.

Our record today will reflect that you have not been compelled to appear. You are reminded that it is unlawful to deliberately provide false information to Members of Congress or to staff.

The record will reflect that you are voluntarily participating in this interview, which will be under oath.

Please raise your right hand.

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

MR. PHARES: I do.

██████████ Thank you.

Mr. Schiff.

MR. SCHIFF: Thank you, and welcome. And I apologize, is it Dr. Phares?

MR. PHARES: Yes, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: Dr. Phares, I'd like to initially ask you about how you came to join the Trump campaign and in what capacity you served.

So would you tell us a little bit about your political activity during the Presidential campaign prior to joining the Trump campaign, if there was any, or whether the Trump campaign was the first campaign you became involved with?

MR. PHARES: Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here with you.

I joined in 2011, 2012 the Romney campaign. I was one of the advisers of Governor Romney. I served throughout the campaign. And since we lost,

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therefore, I ended my term with them.

Between the Romney campaign and the Trump campaign, I have been at times advising Members of Congress on issues related to the Middle East and engaged also with Members of Congress and members of the European Parliament caucus that deals with transatlantic security.

In the fall of 2015, since I was an adviser to a previous candidate, a number of campaigns requested my expertise, including, in the report that I have submitted, the Governor of Wisconsin, Scott Walker, Dr. Ben Carson.

The last candidate that basically requested -- who requested a meeting with me was Mr. Donald Trump. That was in mid-December of 2015. I met him in New York at the Tower. It was my first visit to the Tower, the first time I met him. And we had a discussion of about 1 hour and 40 minutes, as a result of which he asked me to stay in touch and provide him with insight on the region if and when needed.

We stayed indirectly in touch, via his secretary, throughout January and about mid-February. As far as I can recall, at the end of February, I was contacted by his office to see if I'm willing to serve as one of his announced advisers.

And I remember that in March, about mid-March, I have given my consent. And he announced me during a visit that he had to The Washington Post as one of the five named advisers.

Then they added more advisers throughout the campaign.

MR. SCHIFF: Before you go on, let me just go back over some of the events that you discussed.

So in December 2015, when you met with Mr. Trump, was that the first time

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you had met him?

MR. PHARES: It was the first time I met him, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: And during the 1-hour and 40-minute discussion you had with him, who else was present?

MR. PHARES: Corey Lewandowski.

MR. SCHIFF: And anyone else?

MR. PHARES: No, not that I remember.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was the nature of the discussion?

MR. PHARES: The discussion was a briefing I presented to Mr. Trump, basically about the general situation in the Middle East and where the areas of crisis are. And he asked several questions and I answered those questions.

MR. SCHIFF: And did part of your discussion involve Syria and Russian involvement in Syria?

MR. PHARES: It involved Syria. Certainly, we spoke about Syria. And there was a question about Russia and Syria.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was the question?

MR. PHARES: As far as I can remember, to show on a map where the Russians were, where the influence of the Russians were, the northwestern part of Syria.

MR. SCHIFF: And what other questions did the President have for you?

MR. PHARES: He asked me -- we discussed -- I brought -- I brought about a few items, and then he asked me about them.

One of the items he was interested in was safe zones in Syria, how would that work, where would they be. So I showed them on a map, that is with him, where those safe zones are.

The second idea that we discussed was how can the Arab countries help in stabilizing Syria and in Iraq.

The third item that we have discussed was the extremist ideology and is it possible to respond to this extremist ideology.

These were the three large themes that we have discussed.

MR. SCHIFF: And did he express any views to you on Russia's role in Syria?

MR. PHARES: As far as I remember, he did not express a view on Russia, but he expressed a view on Assad regime.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was the view expressed?

MR. PHARES: He asked me, What do you think we can do with regard to the Assad regime? And my answer was, first, we have to have all the information to see what would the other actors want.

And, of course, this is something that basically will have to come up, you know, with a sitting administration, not -- we cannot discuss now what we can do with an Assad regime.

But I mentioned that the Assad regime at this point in time is under the protection of the Russians where they are.

MR. SCHIFF: Did he express a view one way or the other as to whether the Russians were constructive or destructive actors in the region?

MR. PHARES: He did not mention any position with regard to the Russians. Just go back to the point of the Assad regime. His question was really, what do you think we should do with the Assad regime? Should we leave him or should we pressure him as potential policy? But he did not mention the Russian relation to the Assad regime.

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MR. SCHIFF: Is it fair to say that your discussion with him vis-a-vis Russia was peripheral to the discussion?

MR. PHARES: It was peripheral to the discussion, yes, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: Any other light you can shed on then-candidate Trump's views on Russia as expressed in that meeting?

MR. PHARES: Not that I can remember about Russia in general. The only mention was Russia on the coast of Syria and where they are deployed. That's what I can remember from that discussion.

MR. SCHIFF: Now, you mentioned a secretary. Was that Rhona Graff?

MR. PHARES: Yes, sir, it was her.

MR. SCHIFF: And is she the one who reached out to you to set up the meeting?

MR. PHARES: Yes, sir, she was the one.

MR. SCHIFF: You mentioned in February you had your next contact with the campaign when they reached out to you to see if you would be an adviser to the campaign?

MR. PHARES: As far as I can recall, it was about mid- to end of February. During that time, they reached out to me to see if I am willing to give my name as one of the five named -- one of the named. I didn't know how many would there be.

MR. SCHIFF: And at mid-March, you got back to them to say that you would?

MR. PHARES: I don't remember clearly the date, but I can imagine that it was about 1 week to 10 days before he actually released the names. So that would be around that time.

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MR. SCHIFF: Did you have some reluctance, or why did it take as long as it did for you to answer?

MR. PHARES: At first, from December, I was not comfortable to be an adviser to 1 candidate out of 14 candidates, and I was trying not to get involved in primaries. That's my own choice.

So later on, when the field was narrowing, I consulted with my family and friends, and I had a second hesitation should I go into another campaign after the 2012 campaign, and I made my decision that I should.

MR. SCHIFF: You mentioned in February somebody had reached out to you to see if you would be an adviser. Who was it that reached out to you?

MR. PHARES: There were two persons. One is Rhona Graff. The other one is Ivanka, Ms. Ivanka, Mrs. Ivanka, who actually phoned me and asked me if I'm willing to join her father's campaign.

MR. SCHIFF: Now, when Ivanka called, did she ask you to join the campaign in the capacity as a foreign policy adviser?

MR. PHARES: She asked me to join the campaign, as far as I can recall, as an adviser. I assumed it will be foreign policy adviser.

MR. SCHIFF: Did she have any role in the foreign policy shop of the campaign?

MR. PHARES: Now, Congressman, we're talking about the entire campaign to answer that question?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

MR. PHARES: Okay. In the early months of the campaign, I didn't see that she had any role. In the further months, towards the summer, after the convention, I reached out to her to try to get some idea as to the candidate,

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because he was being prepared for the debates. And the debates I think were in about September.

So that was my involvement with her in terms of foreign policy. She would send those ideas to whomever was in charge of preparing him.

MR. SCHIFF: Do you know why it was that she was the one to reach out to you to ask you to be an adviser to the campaign?

MR. PHARES: Congressman, as far as I can remember, I don't know why.

MR. SCHIFF: And at what point did you reach back to her to provide ideas to the candidate?

MR. PHARES: There were several times throughout the campaign, till about October, where I reached out to her, asking her, for example, a question, such as, who should I reach out in the campaign for a purpose or another purpose? Because I was based in Washington, D.C. I wasn't in New York. I wasn't in the smaller circle of people advising the candidate directly. So these were the first purposes.

In about end of August and September, I became active. I reached out to her and asked her, can you convey some of the ideas to the people briefing and prepping the candidate?

MR. SCHIFF: I may come back to that, but I want to find out about your role with the campaign in the interim.

MR. PHARES: Yes.

MR. SCHIFF: So in mid-March, you are named as one of five foreign policy advisers to the President. Who informed you that you were going to be named? Did anyone tell you about that before the announcement?

MR. PHARES: I had that conversation with Ivanka Trump. And she told

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me, can we now use your name? I said, yes, now you can use my name, I've accepted, but it's up to them at their discretion to release it to the media.

As far as I can remember, I think candidate Trump at that time released my first name during either an interview, probably with MSNBC or some other forum, I don't clearly remember. They have asked him, who do you follow on foreign policy or who advises you on foreign policy? He mentioned a couple names, including Richard Haass. And then -- and he said Walid.

A couple people from the press reaching out to me, is that you? I did not answer, because I didn't know what was my status yet.

Then I was surprised that day when -- surprised meaning I was not expecting that he would release my name to The Washington Post. I was sitting at my desk in my office, and phone calls started to come to me and telling me that your name has been released, among other names.

MR. SCHIFF: When you called in mid-March to give your consent, did you call Ivanka, is that who you reached out to?

MR. PHARES: Called Ivanka? Yes. Either called or emailed, I don't remember, Congressman, but it's one of the two.

MR. SCHIFF: But you would have reached out to her, contacted her to give your consent, because she was the one who originally asked?

MR. PHARES: That's correct, Congressman.

MR. SCHIFF: And what was your contact with the campaign after you were named ~~as~~ one of the five foreign policy advisers?

MR. PHARES: It was gradual, as far as I can remember. So Ivanka told me, now you have to meet with Dr. --

MR. SCHIFF: Page?

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MR. PHARES: No, no. The co-chair. I just blanked.

MR. SCHIFF: J.D. Gordon?

MR. PHARES: No, higher. I blanked on his name.

[REDACTED] Sam Clovis?

MR. PHARES: Sam Clovis, thank you. I blank on names sometimes.

MR. SCHIFF: Trying to figure out who were doctors here.

MR. PHARES: Yeah, he's a doctor in government affairs.

So she asked me to meet with him. I'm going to fly to Washington, D.C., and then I'm going to be signing a nondisclosure agreements, which campaigns do. So that was the first time I met with Sam Clovis.

MR. SCHIFF: And when would that have been?

MR. PHARES: That would have been after I consented, as far as I can remember, and before my name was released.

MR. SCHIFF: Okay.

MR. PHARES: And he made me sign a nondisclosure agreement, NDA. And then I asked him, are you signing up other members? He said, yes, you will know later.

MR. SCHIFF: And where did you meet him?

MR. PHARES: At the hotel in the Virginia side. I don't remember exactly where, but I could remember and supply you with that.

MR. SCHIFF: In Alexandria?

MR. PHARES: Yes. I should not say yes very quickly. I could get the name of that hotel or at least the area of that hotel.

MR. SCHIFF: Oh, it's a hotel?

MR. PHARES: It's a hotel, yes, sir.

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MR. SCHIFF: And what did you discuss with Mr. Clovis at that time?

MR. PHARES: Well, we had a discussion on politics and geopolitics. He gave me some of his own views. I gave him some of my views.

And then he gave me the briefing about what does it mean to sign an NDA.

And he told me, once you sign, you are not at liberty to discussing what's happening inside the campaign or the structure before consulting with us.

MR. SCHIFF: Now, you understand, in terms of today's interview, that the NDA does not preclude you from discussing anything we ask you about?

MR. PHARES: Yes, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: I just want to make sure that you don't not answer a question fully because you think you are constrained by the NDA.

MR. PHARES: Thank you, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: In the substantive non-NDA portion of your conversation with Mr. Clovis, what topics did you discuss?

MR. PHARES: From what I can remember, there was one topic that was more striking to me, because it caught my attention, than other topics, because I am mostly interested in foreign policy, national security, than in domestic policy.

So one of the topics he mentioned was that he would be interested in a future U.S. policy to engage more so with national legislatures in Europe than with the European Parliament.

And the reason why we discussed that, because I unveiled to him that I am a co-secretary general of a transatlantic group between Members of the U.S. Congress and members of the European Parliament. So I am very much close to the European Parliament.

So he was explaining to me that his view is slightly different, that he would

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rather that the Congress or the U.S., independently from the campaign, would rather meet with and work with the national legislatures.

MR. SCHIFF: Did you discuss Russia at all in that meeting?

MR. PHARES: In that meeting? No, Congressman, I don't remember we discussed Russia at that meeting. But in future meetings, when you're going to ask me, I'll be happy to brief.

MR. SCHIFF: Okay. Tell me about the next meeting or communication you had with the campaign.

MR. PHARES: So next person to reach out to me was J.D. Gordon.

MR. SCHIFF: And when would that have been?

MR. PHARES: If I may just explain about J.D. Gordon.

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

MR. PHARES: I had known J.D. Gordon before the campaign. I had actually known him in the previous cycle of campaigning. He was serving another campaign. I think it was Governor Huckabee. And I'd known him as NGO work. So I'd known him for the 3, 4 years. He lectured at my university.

So he reached out to me and he told me that he is now coordinating the activities of Senator Sessions, who is going to be in charge of a group of advisers on national security and foreign policy. I was not updated about that group by Ivanka or by Mr. Trump's secretary first. So he just told me, you're going to be one of us, one of that team. I said, fine.

Then he told me, we are going to be having a meeting with the candidate. We don't know where that meeting is going to be. We will only know at the last minute.

I asked him why? He said, because there are going to be a lot of media

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following to see where the meeting will be. And, therefore, stay put. We'll tell you when the meeting will happen and where.

MR. SCHIFF: And when did you have this conversation with J.D. Gordon? Was it on the phone, in person, and when?

MR. PHARES: That was on the phone. That was on the phone.

Now, the best way for me to remember, because I did not take notes, it was about 1 week before the so-called advisory board meeting with the candidate at the Trump Tower under construction. So I could calculate that would be 1 week before.

MR. SCHIFF: Okay.

MR. PHARES: He informed me of something else. He mentioned that the New York campaign told him that a policy shop executive office, is going to be opened in Washington in the Virginia side, and that would be in Alexandria, not far from King Street. And then they requested that I would join that office.

So I asked him who is going to be the executive director of the office. And he told me it's going to be Mr. Rick Dearborn, and that he is going to join.

I asked him, will other advisers named by the candidate will be joining. He said, as far as he knows, it's only me, and they will see if others will join or not or if they will go to New York.

So these were the conversations. I think it was more than one conversation I had with Mr. Gordon before the meeting at the Trump Tower.

MR. SCHIFF: Did Mr. Gordon tell you whether you would become a paid member of the staff or merely a volunteer adviser, or what capacity you would serve?

MR. PHARES: No. His knowledge was that I will be as a volunteer. At

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that time, I was a volunteer and he was a volunteer, and everybody serving in that office at that time were volunteers.

MR. SCHIFF: And would the policy shop in Alexandria, led by Mr. Dearborn, would that be focused on national security, foreign policy issues?

MR. PHARES: I asked him the question, and I got the answer slice after slice.

So one part of that entire office, one side will be policy in general -- that includes national policy, legislations, relations with Congress, and there were individuals in charge of that task -- and then foreign policy and national security.

And once we met -- and you could ask me, please, about the details -- once we met the first time with Mr. Rick Dearborn, he assigned several tasks to several people. Mr. Gordon was assigned national security. I was assigned foreign policy. Mr. Mashburn, John Mashburn, if I'm not wrong on the name, was assigned domestic policy. There was another gentleman -- I forgot the name -- who was assigned relationship with Congress.

So multiple desks. And there were other staffers with us as well. Only one staffer was also assigned foreign policy, but specifically diplomatic relations. And that's Tera Dahl, D-a-h-l.

So that was the structure of the office.

Let me add for your knowledge that there was another side to the office where there was another team, which we didn't know and we'd never been to the other side, who were in charge of dealing with elections, with delegates, with this whole operation.

MR. SCHIFF: Was Mr. Manafort part of that?

MR. PHARES: We were told that they respond to Mr. Manafort, but I have

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not seen Mr. Manafort personally. I have learned that he has visited that office. I personally did not see him.

MR. SCHIFF: And so was this all communicated to you during that first meeting or over time about the nature of the Alexandria office?

MR. PHARES: It was communicated to me by Mr. Gordon via phone calls and probably a coffee meeting just before we met, just before we moved to that — I think at the Starbucks downstairs — before we moved to that apartment or office.

MR. SCHIFF: And did you move into that office prior to the meeting with the candidate or after the meeting with the candidate?

MR. PHARES: As far as I can remember — I mean, I real squeeze my memory here — as far as I can remember, we had at least one or two meetings. We were supposed to go that office 9 to 5. That was the principle. I did not comply completely with 9 to 5, but certainly 9 to a few hours.

During those initial days, then we were told that there's going to be a meeting with the candidate when he visits Washington, D.C.

MR. SCHIFF: And in those initial conversations with J.D. Gordon and the other people who had come to occupy that office and prior to the meeting with the candidate, was Russia a part of the discussion at all?

MR. PHARES: Prior to the meeting with the candidate, as far as I can remember, there could have been — that's why I'm saying, underlining could have been — a discussion between Gordon and myself: Okay, what is it that we're going to do? Who's going to cover what?

And then I mentioned that I will be covering the Middle East. That's my area of expertise.

And then we asked ourselves the question, who will be covering Latin

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America, who will be covering Russia, who will be covering China?

So we had that discussion, but there were no substantive material to what we're going to do in which direction or who exactly is it going to be.

And I remember now, I did remember already, that Mr. Gordon had a task to assemble a list of specialists, eventually advisers, lower-level advisers, who would deal with the various files. And that list must be with him or with some archive. But that is the extent I can remember that Russia was discussed.

MR. SCHIFF: And do you recall who was assigned Russia?

MR. PHARES: Not at that stage, Congressman. To the best of my understanding or recollection, I didn't see names actually covering the areas other than the Middle East. I mean, other than myself for the Middle East.

MR. SCHIFF: And this list that you discussed that J.D. Gordon had written up, was it a handwritten list or a typewritten list?

MR. PHARES: I think it was both, Congressman, the best way I can remember, because we were sitting at the desk, and then he would be putting names, scratching names, going to see Mr. Rick Dearborn and back, and would ask him, what are these names, who are these people? I saw that list twice scribbled and then I saw it typed.

MR. SCHIFF: And do you recall, if not at that time, at some subsequent time, who was assigned on the list to Russia?

MR. PHARES: The best of my remembrance, no, I do not recall a name for Russia. But I recall that there should be somebody, an expert on Russia to give analysis on Russia.

Because the idea initially before I left the office was we need to have experts who would write policy papers on all these countries, including Middle

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East, Latin America, China, Russia. So that was the principle.

But I don't remember seeing a specific name related to Russia. I saw many names, former generals, former people who served in the government. I can't recall all their names, but if I see the list, I can confirm that the names were on or not.

MR. SCHIFF: And when were you informed about the meeting that would take place with the candidate, how many days in advance of the meeting?

MR. PHARES: That's a good question to try to remember well. The best I can remember is that Mr. Gordon told me maybe about 2 to 3 days -- I could be wrong, but I just do my best to remember -- that the candidate will be visiting Washington. There was another event in Washington that I can't recall. Maybe a meeting in -- with Congress at the time.

So he told me there's going to be a meeting. The morning of the day of the meeting, he mentioned to me that be ready, it's going to be either at the location near Congress, the law office, Jones --

MR. SCHIFF: Jones Day?

MR. PHARES: Yes, sir. Or it's going to be at another location.

Then probably about, to the best of my recollection, an hour and a half before, he said, it's going to be at the Trump Hotel. I said, it's under construction. He said, yes, it's going to be at the Trump Hotel. So you're going to go there and there is the door, specific door on Pennsylvania, you go in, and they will lead you to that room.

MR. SCHIFF: If you'd walk us through what happened when you went to that meeting, as best you can, in terms of what happened prior to the meeting, what happened during the meeting, your participation, others. If you could give

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us a narrative what took place.

MR. PHARES: Yes, sir. Prior to that, I may just preface something. So I'll give you all what I remember. Then when I went in, I'll try to give you the best that I can remember.

But the issue is that because there have been so many statements about that meeting, including last summer, and many of the persons or some of the persons who have opined or expressed what was happening in the meeting, so they are impacting the memory about the meeting.

MR. SCHIFF: Sure.

MR. PHARES: If you understand what I'm trying to say. So I'm going to give you first my original recollection of the meeting, and then there are going to be layers of what other people said, and I could confirm or infirm (ph) if it's sound.

MR. SCHIFF: That's very helpful. I have to say, you're one of the most clear witnesses we've had. We appreciate that.

MR. PHARES: I will try to be as clear, and maybe my accent is helping me. I don't know. Speaking slowly for them.

MR. SCHIFF: Please go ahead.

MR. PHARES: Please, thank you.

So I went there and I went to the entrance. It was all under construction. And we ended up in a room which was not well-equipped with a long table. And then it was the first time I meet with all of the others except J.D. Gordon. So let me just begin by who knew who.

So there was J.D. Gordon. There were the other members. If you have the picture, I could --

[REDACTED] We do.

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[The information follows:]

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MR. PHARES: Okay. The famous picture. And it will be in my memoirs, but let me explain how it ended up being here.

So there was the table right here, and we started to move from all sides. We didn't know where the candidate is going to be sitting. So everybody was selecting their chairs. I imagined that he would be sitting where Senator Sessions is. So I told him, let me go and hide on the other side. So I went. Here you can see my bare head, right here.

And let me just say, that Senator Sessions I've seen on TV, maybe one time in a green room of a TV. I didn't have any relationship with the Senator.

Gordon, I just said that I knew Mr. Gordon very well.

Papadopoulos, I have never seen him before. Neither I knew anything about him nor when he was Googled, because his name was -- you know, other than the U.N. model that he spoke about, I didn't know anything.

Mr. Schmitz, whom I knew better during the campaign, I didn't know him personally, but when we spoke we knew person in common. He was a former inspector general in one of the departments.

Admiral or General Mizusawa, I didn't know him from before.

The gentleman here, I don't have his name and I didn't know him even before.

Admiral Kubic, also, I didn't know him from before.

And is it Kellogg? General Kellogg.

So from the whole group here, I only knew Senator Sessions, from public appearances, and Mr. Gordon.

So I sat there. Then the candidate came in, and he came in with many

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other people. So when you see that picture, this is not just the people who were in the room. There were many people standing around or sitting around.

And as far as I can remember, there were pictures taken from a person here, and then some other person stood up there on a chair and took more pictures. I just happened to be -- because in the media you see the angles, maybe they're important. So there may be other pictures of the meeting, that was my point.

And then the persons who are here, I would assume they were from the campaign coming from New York. I recognized one person because she introduced herself to me, and that's Ms. Hope. Full name —

MR. SCHIFF: Hope Hicks?

MR. PHARES: Hope Hicks, yes, sir.

And one of the persons shook my hand, but -- I think one was Mr. Rick Dearborn, was also present at that meeting. The others, I don't recall who they were.

Oh, one person, so I can be completely clear here. The gentleman here is one of the vice presidents of the Heritage Foundation. I don't recall his — he's a friend, and I'm sorry, I'm blanking on his name, but we could -- he was in the transition as well. It's terrible with names with me.

So this is the scenario of how we entered and we sat. So Senator Sessions was the first -- so the candidate came in, and then he sat and looked at everybody. And I was -- I happened to be the immediate person next to him. It was intimidating and impressive.

So Senator Sessions was the one who opened, said, well, thank you, candidate -- Mr. Trump, for coming and let me introduce you to the individuals

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here.

I am not sure that he has met everybody before, but he was in charge, so he had the list of the individuals.

Now I will give you my recollection at the time without being influenced by what was said before -- what was said later, because that's very important, could impact my memory.

So what I remember is that Senator Sessions was the one who introduced the event, the meeting, and he was the one who introduced the candidate to us, some sort of preface, you know. And then he was the one who gave the idea that each one of you, why don't you tell the candidate who are you and what do you do and whatever you want to express to him.

And to my concern, he started with me. So that's in my memoirs and, of course, in the Halls of Congress.

Since he had seen me already in December, I assumed he would remember me. And he remembers my first name more than my last name, for some reason. So I covered two areas. And most of the members remember that, including Mr. Gordon. I began with a joke, and then I made one little statement.

And the reason why I did not want to go into depth, number one, because I've served before in a campaign and I know how these things happen. If you go in depth in a meeting like this, it's going to take a long time. And I don't have any subject that I can, you know, develop in 1 minute.

Second, I didn't know about all the others, what do they think. So I reserved my in depth to later, thinking that later I'm going to be meeting with the candidate or with the seniors and then talking about.

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So the joke was that -- looked at him, Mr. Trump -- since you appointed me, I have been hit by my hostiles. I have a lot of people who criticize my work. It has nothing to do with the campaign. I publish and people who don't like my -- what I say or what I write. I have been attacked many times. So the joke was, I took away from you 20 percent of the attacks against you, 20 percent of the attacks against you. So that was, I thought, was a joke, and they laughed.

The second point, I mentioned that I am focusing now on looking at the greater Middle East, and I'll be happy to update the campaign on the ongoing four wars that exist and on what could be good signs and bad signs coming from the region.

That's as far as I can remember. Maybe it was longer; maybe it was shorter. And then the gentlemen, most of the gentlemen next to me, they started to each one express their views.

I remember from this side, I'm not sure if it was General Kellogg or Admiral Kubic, they mentioned military readiness. So this is what I remember from the first cycle, from the first raw material into my ear.

Because, frankly, I was more interested in looking at Mr. Trump, to be honest -- that's reality, you are sitting with Donald Trump -- and than listening at what the other members were talking about.

But I do remember that they mentioned military readiness, and one of the two mentioned nuclear preparedness. Preparedness. Okay.

These are the items that I remember from this. They may have said more than that, but this sticks to my head. And it went around all the way to, I think, Gordon. Gordon spoke, as far as I can remember, about media and communications. And, of course, I'm sure you want me to talk about

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Mr. Papadopoulos.

MR. SCHIFF: Yes, please.

MR. PHARES: Okay. What I can remember from what Mr. Papadopoulos was saying -- and my attention was very low, as I said -- it was Russia and the United States. There is no doubt about the two terms were there.

And the next term I remember was, I could -- I could either do something or reach. But that's what he meant. I don't remember the actual words of English, but that's what he actually meant, that I could do, I know, I. And then he said, the third item I remember, relations could be fixed. This is the fragments of what I remember.

Now, because there has been so much media and so much hearings and et cetera, there are fuller sentences that were used later. And I've been asked -- and I've never been on the media, by the way, never -- about the whole issue of investigation, but that's what I remember about Mr. Papadopoulos' statement. I don't remember about the statements of the other three gentlemen.

Then I can say a few words about the candidate himself.

MR. SCHIFF: Yes. Before we leave Mr. Papadopoulos, obviously, what he said during the meeting has been the subject of a lot of press coverage since. Did that coverage refresh your recollection at all to the particulars of what he said?

MR. PHARES: That's a great question, Congressman. Some of the coverage refreshed a little bit, some of the statements that were made rang into my brain that this could have been what he had said. It goes along what I was hearing.

Unfortunately, my first hearing was not -- my first reception of the words was not. But it's like a line, you could put a word and a word and a word.

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Meaning my interest is Russia — I'm paraphrasing.

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

MR. PHARES: My interest is Russia. I have contacts I could develop if you want or something like that, and then the relationship could be fixed.

So any sentence that was said later in the media or in hearings that would go along these lines would be most likely what could have been said.

MR. SCHIFF: And do you recall when Mr. Papadopoulos made these comments, did it prompt any reaction from Jeff Sessions?

MR. PHARES: Yes. There was -- again, there was a reaction from Senator Sessions. And excuse me, but my memory is only visual than words. He kind of tried to stop the conversation and, as the media said, shut it down, meaning we'll address that later, this is not the time to talk about this. I cannot remember the words, but that was the general attitude of Mr. Sessions.

MR. SCHIFF: And did the President respond directly to what Mr. Papadopoulos said?

MR. PHARES: The candidate then responded. But, again, it's so tough to remember. When you're sitting and looking at him, I kind of forgot what he was saying.

But he said, okay, I heard you, or something in that vicinity. He didn't ask him another question, as far as I can remember, can you expand on this? I mean, the whole attitude, I can say clearly now, for all of the statements, including mine, is that he was not there to engage all these members in in-depth discussions.

And I opined already at the Senate side that my feeling -- this is only my feeling, I could be wrong -- that the meeting was about the picture and to send the

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message that: I have a foreign policy team. That's my impression. I could be wrong, but I did not change my impression.

MR. SCHIFF: Now, Mr. Sessions' response to Mr. Papadopoulos, essentially this is not the time, we'll address this later, did that happen after everyone finished speaking or did that happen immediately after Papadopoulos finished speaking?

MR. PHARES: That I have a clearer remembrance. It was after Mr. Papadopoulos.

MR. SCHIFF: And the President's comments about, I heard you, would those have been -- did he address people sequentially after each spoke, or did he wait until everyone was done and then sort of go around the table?

MR. PHARES: Congressman, I remember, the best I can, is that after each person he said a few words.

MR. SCHIFF: And your best recollection, in terms of what he responded to Papadopoulos, was something along the lines that: I hear you?

MR. PHARES: Yes, I hear you. He could have said other words, but I don't remember what were the other words.

I don't think, from my recollection, that he engaged except for the question about nuclear readiness. He asked a question. So the military who said, our nuclear readiness, he then asked a question and the military responded, as far as I can remember, and then Mr. Trump closed.

MR. SCHIFF: And did candidate Trump make any kind of a closing set of remarks after everyone spoke or was there another round of discussion or was this, as you indicated, more about getting the photo?

MR. PHARES: I repeat again here that my impression was that he was in

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a hurry to come in, to engage, to probably have this picture, and then to go to other meetings. That was my impression, because I've been with previous candidates in those setting of meetings. I don't think anyone except, I think, the Senator where -- and where the candidate will come and then will have an in-depth discussion of issues.

So I saw clearly this was different. That's my initial impression.

Now, when we -- when we -- when the last person here finished, Mr. Sessions said, thank you all, and thank you, Mr. Candidate. And I think the candidate may have said -- and I can't recall clearly -- something, the usual very abstract. He didn't go to substance. You know, when he's not reading from a text, he has abstract statements that he -- he made one of those abstract statements.

MR. SCHIFF: And when Mr. Sessions commented after Papadopoulos that this is not the time, we'll address that later, was it your sense that -- was he cutting off Mr. Papadopoulos for going on too long and wanted to essentially move on, or was he commenting in some way about the nature of what Mr. Papadopoulos was proposing?

MR. PHARES: The best of my recollection, Congressman, is that he was probably doing both. Mr. Papadopoulos was going on and on unusually, and Senator Sessions wanted him to be -- to stop. But he didn't cut off anybody else.

So I imagine and project, to the best of my understanding, that he was not comfortable with the subject. He was not comfortable that the subject was being stretched to drag the candidate into discussion. That's the best of my recollection.

██████████ Five minutes, sir.

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MR. SCHIFF: And was there any other discussion during that meeting of U.S.-Russia relations or contacts with Russia?

MR. PHARES: During that meeting?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes.

MR. PHARES: No. Once the -- no, meaning as far as I can remember. When this gentleman ended, Sessions thanked everybody, Mr. Trump, thanks again, and everybody stood up and then withdrew.

If your question is, were there discussions about Russia after the meeting, then I have a different answer. Would you like that?

MR. SCHIFF: Yes, I would.

MR. PHARES: Okay. Then everybody was to be introduced to everybody. It was chaos inside the room. And then we were evacuated out of the room. So the candidate and his team left.

And I think it was J.D. or maybe Joe Schmitz who said, okay, guys why don't we go across the street, there is a restaurant, and then we will get to know each other, because we didn't know each other, and keep the discussion.

So we went there, and there we had discussions. So each one of the advisers, named advisers will tell the others about what they are doing. But it was loud, it was waiters coming, ordering. So it was not a significant sit-down.

But I remember that Mr. Papadopoulos during that lunch and screening, everybody else was talking about what's their interest, he mentioned then Russia. He said he was excited that he was able to meet with the candidate and throw the first idea, and then he mentioned Russia.

Now, do I recall every word he mentioned? I do not. But he went back to Russia and said, let's see what I can do and et cetera. He did not get the

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attention of the other advisers there, but my ear heard that he mentioned Russia, but nothing really practical intention.

MR. SCHIFF: When you said he said something along the lines of let me see what I can do or put together, did you have the impression that he was indicating that he was going to pursue his contacts with Russia on behalf of the campaign?

MR. PHARES: As I told the Senate, I mean, that was -- that was not a secret. I mean, him trying to say I have contacts was a conversation every time he would see people for the little times we met him, he would mention that. And he was not hiding. He said, you know, we could reach out and we could do this. So that was what Mr. Papadopoulos was trying to bring to the table.

MR. SCHIFF: Now, you mentioned that you tried to separate your recollection of the meeting from what it first was and then what it later became. Is there something in particular that you saw in press reporting that gives you a better understanding what took place in the meeting? Is there something else you wanted to add with respect to that?

MR. PHARES: Congressman, for that meeting, I think, personally, I think, meaning the best way I can recollect, is that the reporting about the meeting at some point was bigger than the actual meeting. That's my modest recollection of it.

I cannot report on what individuals told individuals around. I mean, this is a group of at least seven, plus another eight. So the conversations that took place, that I could not capture that, I cannot testify to. So I did my best to mention to you that when we went to the restaurant, the name, the term "Russia" was used.

MR. SCHIFF: After the meeting in the restaurant, what was the next

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campaign interaction?

MR. PHARES: The next campaign interaction, to the best of my knowledge, unless you remind me of anything in between, was the famous, highly publicized foreign policy speech by the candidate at the Mayflower Hotel where we were asked -- I was still -- I was still visiting the executive office in Alexandria, because I will want to mention that I only lasted 2 weeks, then I left the office.

But during that time, if I recall well, again, Mr. J.D. Gordon asked us, myself, all the other members who were named, to go to the Mayflower, because the candidate is going to deliver a speech on foreign policy. And then our task was to speak with media after the speech is delivered. So we were to act as surrogates.

And, two, if there are NGO people, federation, foundation, because they have invited -- actually, the team has invited a long list of people. Not just the media, but of community leaders, think tanks, et cetera.

[REDACTED] One minute, sir.

MR. SCHIFF: One minute? My colleagues will pick up the chronology there.

MR. PHARES: Absolutely.

MR. SCHIFF: But I do want to ask you, when is the first time that you had contact with Carter Page?

MR. PHARES: That's a question I need to be reflecting very seriously about.

I remember the first time -- what I can remember, but I could do more reflection on that -- was at the lunch for the group. The group -- J.D. organized a couple lunches. So at one of the lunches Carter Page was there.

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MR. SCHIFF: Was that before or after the Mayflower speech?

MR. PHARES: I don't have recollection. Most likely, if I can use this terminology, most likely it was after. But I don't have a recollection. I don't have notes, unfortunately, from this very dense time.

MR. SCHIFF: Okay. Thank you. I yield to the majority.

[REDACTED] Thank you.

BY [REDACTED]

Q And, Dr. Phares, thank you for being here, on behalf of the committee and the majority members. I hope that you will please attribute the absence of any members on our side to the vagaries of the congressional schedule, which led to votes being cancelled today at the last minute, rather than any lack of interest in what you have to share with us.

I want to start by focusing a little more on Mr. Papadopoulos and then turning to Mr. Page.

So candidate Trump may have mentioned you once on TV, but you were formally announced as a foreign policy adviser during a meeting between candidate Trump and The Washington Post editorial board. Is that correct?

A That's correct, sir.

Q And you were one of five people that he mentioned as a formal -- publicly announced as a foreign policy adviser at that time. Is that correct?

A One of five, and then others were added later.

Q Right.

A So we became that large.

Q Right. But the initial five included yourself, correct?

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A That's correct, sir.

Q It included Mr. Page?

A The announced, yes, included Mr. Page, yes.

Q And it also included Mr. Papadopoulos?

A That's correct, yes.

Q So at the time when Mr. Papadopoulos was announced as a foreign policy adviser alongside yourself, did you know anything about him or who he was?

A At the time where those names announced, if you ask me about both Mr. Papadopoulos and Mr. Page, I didn't know anything about them.

Q And you had never met them?

A I have never met them before.

Q And you had never interacted with them in any way?

A Never read any piece, any article. Because sometimes you don't know the person personally in Washington, but you know their work. It was a total dark on both of them.

Q Right. And do you have any insight you could share with us as to how Mr. Papadopoulos initially became affiliated with the campaign?

A To the best of my recollection and reconstruction -- recollection is my memory, reconstruction is after a few months I had discussions with other people around and they said my reconstruction -- so at the time I didn't know how they came. But with time my mind started to reconstruct the facts.

Now I know that Mr. Papadopoulos was first working with another campaign before he joined the Trump campaign.

Q And which campaign was that?

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A Dr. Ben Carson. At the time I didn't know, because I personally briefed Dr. Carson, but I didn't know who he had with him in his shop.

So he, Mr. Papadopoulos, according to the persons with whom I had conversation, told me he came -- sorry, I'm too fast -- he came from that campaign through individuals. I don't recall the names of the individuals. But one of the individuals who basically was in touch with the Carson campaign to recruit individuals after the doctor stepped down was Dr. --

Q Clovis?

A Clovis, thank you. So Dr. Clovis basically brought him to our campaign.

Q And with respect to Dr. Page, do you have any idea -- so at the time you didn't know, when he was announced, how he had become affiliated with the campaign?

A No, I knew more about Mr. Papadopoulos, because I was told how he came. But for Mr. Page till now, I don't know exactly how he came, till now.

Q Even sitting here today, you're not sure how he got on?

A Even sitting here today, I don't know. I'm not sure, but I would qualify that I really don't have that information.

Q So with respect to Mr. Papadopoulos, you mentioned your interactions with him or his presentation that he made on the meeting on March 31st as well as what you remember of the response from then-Senator Sessions.

Did you have any response to his comments; either that you expressed to others or that you just felt yourself when he mentioned about proposing outreach to Russia?

A At that meeting, none. At the restaurant get-together, I had a very

short conversation with him, because he was not sitting next to me. He was sitting somewhere else.

Now, it's so back in time, but the little pieces I can remember, he had a longer conversation with J.D. J.D. Gordon was interacting with everybody else since he's the coordinator, but I captured that conversation.

But that was all for this event. Now, there are other events where I could help you more.

Q Right. And one thing that strikes me from looking at this picture, and I think it's been reflected in some of the media accounts of Mr. Papadopoulos, is he was quite a bit younger and potentially less experienced than many of the other advisers. Did you make anything of that as to -- or have any understanding of why someone who is quite a bit younger than yourself and these other advisers was affiliated with the campaign?

A All right. My answer will be twofold.

Number one -- number one is that since we haven't seen him -- and clearly I have not done research on his age just before. Now, I know the media would do research on his age, but I did not capture that.

When I saw him, I was a little bit surprised, that he's really young for this level of advisers, but it would have been possible if he was really qualified for some important matter. At this point, it was very early. We didn't know each other.

Later on, I had -- we had discussions among ourself. We call them chats among the members. And then it was raised, the issue of why would Mr. Papadopoulos, in regard of his age or his CV, be one of us. Yes, that has been raised by -- in our chats.

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Q So you talked extensively about his comments in your interactions with him on March 31st. Can you just characterize any other interactions you had with Mr. Papadopoulos thereafter, particularly with respect to Russia?

A What is the span of time? That would help me. Because there were email exchanges and there were discussions. Do you want me -- I could add both of them.

Q Well, let's start with the in-person meeting. So other than -- well, so was -- did you know whether or not Mr. Papadopoulos lived in D.C.?

A That -- I got the information from him during that lunch, that he told us that he was living in London, and it was another surprise. And he said he had another house or residence in Chicago. So he was not in D.C.

Q Right. So he didn't live in D.C.?

A No.

Q Did you ever see him in the D.C. office?

A Oh, no. The best I can remember, he had -- I have never seen him in the D.C. office, per se.

Q By which I mean the one in Alexandria.

A Alexandria. Yes, sir.

Q Right. So you saw him at this meeting. You never saw him in the Alexandria office. What other times during the campaign do you recall seeing Mr. Papadopoulos in person?

A The best I can recall was at least -- this is the best I can recall -- at one of the lunches -- we used to call them pizza meetings, it was an Italian place -- he was there. And that was the probably first and most important time where we exchanged ideas and views.

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The second one was at Congress, and I mentioned it in my report, where -- and I could expand a little bit to explain what that meeting was all about.

There were members of the European Parliament visiting with and meeting with Members of the U.S. Congress, the House mostly, from both parties.

And the European side had mentioned to me when I went to speak to -- to deliver a speech in Europe, that there is a lot of unease about your candidate -- because they knew that I was a foreign policy adviser -- we would like to have a delegation or a team from your campaign -- because they are right of center -- when we come to Washington in July, mid-July, to explain to us or to respond to a few questions.

I said, fine. I contacted Dr. Clovis. And he said, okay, let's have a team. And Mr. Papadopoulos was part of that team.

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[12:15 p.m.]

BY [REDACTED]

Q Right. So that's a second time you remember meeting with him. Are there any other personal meetings that you recall with Mr. Papadopoulos?

A I don't recall, but there could have been phone calls, and of course, there were emails.

Q And in any of your discussions, phone calls, or email exchanges with Mr. Papadopoulos, do you remember him discussing the idea of setting up contacts with Russia similar to what he raised at this March 31st meeting?

A Yes, I can answer clearly because there's an email, maybe more than one email.

Now, let me preface by saying our campaign emails have been closed about December, early January, so I don't have access to them, but I know all the committees, everybody has them.

Q Right.

A So there are emails in those, and I think I have a couple of emails that I do have, and I'll be happy to send to your committee about -- sent by Mr. Papadopoulos whereby clearly he said. I would like -- I cannot paraphrase because the email is not in front of me -- I would like to suggest to try to establish contact with people who could get him, therefore, the campaign, in touch with Russia.

Q And do you recall who else might have been on those emails? Again, understanding you don't have them in front of you, so we're just asking about what you recall sitting here today.

A The best of my recollection, since we are going to have the email,

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would be a number of persons on -- not all of them, a few of them, and Dr. Clovis.

Q And when you received these emails or were made aware of these efforts by Mr. Papadopoulos to broker meetings with the Russians, what was your response?

A As emails will show, none. And I have to also preface that, because in one of the short conversations, I don't recall when, but Mr. Papadopoulos knew about my work. I have published 12 books, so it's not I have to convince him, and many articles and would see me on TV probably before the campaign and during the campaign.

I was pushing back against Russia because of the Middle East. I didn't interfere in the Russia-U.S. opinion making, but in the Middle East, Russia was backing Iran and the Assad regime, and I am one of the voices that pushes against that.

So I do project, not sure, that him not approaching me a lot on this issue has to do with my public statement. He did have a conversation, though, but it was not relentless on this issue. So, I think, when you read the email, you could see who he sent that email to and you could see what was the interaction by others.

Q What, if anything, do you recall of the response of others on the campaign, particularly in more senior positions, to these efforts by Mr. Papadopoulos?

A Now, again, here, you're going to have my recollection and what was there in the media from all the research, so I'm going to try to merge both the best I can.

From what I remember, without statements made to the media, is that there

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were two persons reacting to Mr. Papadopoulos. That's what I can remember from most of the discussions and exchanges.

One was Dr. Clovis; the other one was J.D. Gordon. The incident involving J.D. Gordon and Papadopoulos, that I remember the most, was about Mr. Papadopoulos out of London criticizing I think the Prime Minister of Great Britain for him criticizing Donald Trump. And then J.D. Gordon rushed -- called him, but I wasn't there to hear what he said. J.D. told us that he called him. He called also Clovis, and both agreed that he has to stop -- Mr. Papadopoulos has to stop making statements. That was the incident with J.D. Gordon.

Now, with Dr. Clovis, there were emails, and there was ■ conversation -- and there was ■ conversation, let me see, when we were in Congress about that matter. So let me go, first of all, about the emails.

The emails I saw were the emails that I saw in the media, the same -- so I guess they had them -- whereby Dr. Clovis, in the general terms, was attempting, you know, not to give green lights to Papadopoulos to engage, trying to delay, trying to get answers from leadership. That's how I read those emails. But if they're in front of me, I could actually opine further because I saw them.

And Mr. Papadopoulos made several requests for trips. One of them was to Russia, if I remember those emails, and one of them was general that would include potentially Russia.

Q So do you recall anyone from the campaign encouraging or giving sanctions to these sort of activities that Mr. Papadopoulos was engaged in to try to broker contacts with the Russians?

A The one I remember vividly was Dr. Clovis because we were on email with him. The ones I saw in the media now, of course, in archives --

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Q So you recall Dr. Clovis encouraging these efforts?

A No, engaging about these efforts.

Q Right.

A Encouraging to go, meaning --

Q Yeah, let me ask my question again.

MR. SOCARRAS: Just listen to the question.

MR. PHARES: I'm sorry about that.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Do you recall anyone from the campaign encouraging or offering official sanction to Mr. Papadopoulos's efforts to broker these contacts with the Russians?

A That's a very wide question. I would say, from what I recall, was that Mr. Papadopoulos reaching out to Clovis, asking him what about such trips, and then there's a blank. I don't recall, from my personal experience, what Dr. Clovis has responded, but then I read an email.

So do you want to call this recall? That was what I learned in the media later, that he had asked him, from what I can understand, to explore -- what would that be -- meaning to give him a plan of what would that mean, and then nothing has happened, as far as I understood.

Q And are you -- other than this meeting on March 31st, are you aware of any other interactions between Mr. Papadopoulos and Candidate Trump?

A As far as I can remember, I am not aware of any of that information related to any meeting between Mr. Papadopoulos or -- and the Candidate.

Q Are you aware of any meetings or interactions between Mr. Papadopoulos and senior New York-based campaign officials?

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A Months later -- we're now in about September -- on a different topic, I learned that Mr. Papadopoulos and Mr. Steve Bannon conducted a meeting with the Egyptian Ambassador and diplomats, with regard preparing for the meeting between the Candidate and the Egyptian president who came to New York and met with both candidates. That's as far as I can remember.

Q And you recall learning about that meeting at the time it happened or you learned about it later?

A I learned that -- let me be very clear here. I learned about that meeting from the Egyptians themselves later after the meeting took place. They told me, well, this is how the meeting was taking place.

Q And understand this is a sort of -- asks a little bit for your assessment, but when Mr. Papadopoulos was speaking about these interactions with the Russians, did you perceive him as acting on behalf of the campaign and the Candidate or did you perceive him to be kind of freelancing or maybe acting a little bit outside of his brief as a policy adviser?

A If you can give me the space to qualify it as assessment. So this is not going to be witnessing anything, but that's my own assessment from looking at the progress in behavior and in conversations. That is a qualify. Then I would say my assessment is that from the moment he made those approaches in the meeting, that he could engage in these relationships, to the last time I remember have seen him in Congress, because I don't remember after that have -- seeing him. I don't have the recollection. Is that what he wanted to do is to appear in the campaign as the person who could engage in establishing these relationships. That's my assessment.

Now, but my assessment is not based on all the information because I have

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very little information about that.

Q Are you aware of any interactions between Mr. Papadopoulos, who you mentioned was based in London, and British government officials on behalf of the campaign?

A He mentioned one time -- actually more than one time in front of the rest, that he has a lot of contacts, including in Britain, and in Greece, and in Israel, and in Egypt. He was always mentioning that he had all these great contacts. Anything very specific on behalf of the campaign, I have no knowledge of.

Q Turning to Dr. Page. Now, I believe it was your testimony earlier that when he was announced as a foreign policy adviser alongside yourself to the Washington Post, you weren't familiar with him.

A I didn't know anything about him.

Q And that even to this day, you're not sure exactly how he found himself on the campaign; is that right?

A Yes, to this day, I still don't know how he came to the campaign, except he was brought in by Dr. Clovis.

Q Now, did Dr. Page attend this March 31st meeting with the Candidate?

A I don't have a recollection of him being there. I could be wrong if he was sitting somewhere else, but my memory tells me I don't remember. Plus I have one fragment in my memory that one of the advisers that was supposed to come couldn't make it, but I couldn't put a name on a face.

Q And do you know where Dr. Page lived or was based while he was an adviser on the campaign?

A As far as he told us, in New York.

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Q And did he have a desk or working space at the campaign office in Alexandria?

A As far as I can remember, I haven't seen Mr. Page in that office.

Q Did you ever meet Dr. Page in person?

A I did meet with Dr. Page in person, yes.

Q And do you remember the circumstances of those meetings?

A I do remember one meeting whereby the whole group was meeting, so the foreign policy organized by Mr. Gordon. So he was at least at one. That's what my memory is telling me. And I do remember, of course, that he was at the convention.

He was at the Republican convention, and he was doing that day that was mentioned many time in the media where the advisers were invited to a panel, and there were many diplomats. He was there.

Q And the advisers' get-together, where you met him, do you recall where that was or when that was?

A I recall at least one time, which was at the Italian fine restaurant on Route 7 in Virginia. So we were the advisers, and that was coordinated by Mr. Gordon.

Another meeting that I did not attend took place between the advisers and Senator Sessions. I don't know where it was, but I recall J.D. mentioning to me that we -- can you come? I said I won't be able; I won't be in town. So there was a meeting. That one was attended by Mr. Page.

Now, because of media and report, now I know that this meeting has been discussed in various places.

Q But you weren't at the one -- the time you recall meeting Dr. Page,

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Senator Sessions was not there; is that correct?

A No, he was not there.

Q All right. So when — I just want to focus on the meeting that you attended with Dr. Page. Did the two of you discuss Russia, or do you recall him discussing Russia with anyone?

A Actually we were sitting around the table, so there were no personal -- I mean, dual discussions. It was a general discussion, and Mr. Page mentioned that -- well, we asked him, because he was mentioning that he has -- he travels to Russia, he has a business in Russia, he's a consultant, so that was -- basically, we asked him what do you do in life, so -- and then there were questions and answers with him about his assessment of Russia relations.

Let me go back 1 inch up and say: At that time, discussing international relations and relations with Russia or China or anybody in the world, was not a taboo. It was a normal matter. So the questions were: who, among you, has a better expertise on what area of the world, that was the understanding.

Q Right. And other than this meeting in the convention, do you ever recall interacting with Dr. Page in person?

A Yes, I did interact with him at the convention. We had side -- quick discussions. But there was one time -- I can't recall the date, but I could do research to remember that date, was it before or after the convention where we had a dinner, him and I. He was -- I was meeting -- here we go.

I was meeting with a few members of this team at the office of Mr. Attorney Schmitz. Mr. Page was there. So we had that meeting, and then we left to the mall and we had a dinner. So this was probably the meeting I can remember the most where I spent time with him.

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Q So that's -- by my count, that's three personal interactions with him that you recall?

A These are the ones I recall.

Q And, again, I want to set aside the exchange of views with respect to foreign policy topics, including Russia, but do you ever recall him seeking to broker meetings or contacts with Russians on behalf of the campaign either him expressing that in person or via email or via phone?

A Let me begin with, the clearest one is email. I have potential memory that tells me that he may have mentioned Russia related matter in email.

Now, the issue is -- the campaign emails are not with me, but if I see them, I could confirm them, and I'm not sure I have a private email with him on this issue. All I can remember on email, that maybe during a discussion, a group discussion he had mentioned it, but very limited.

In actual discussions that we had, he brought about the issue of, again, relations between the U.S. and Russia can be fixed. That's the general theme, that he travels to Russia professionally.

Q And was he saying -- did you understand him to be saying relationships between Russia and the United States can be fixed if we adopt a certain policy or that he was proposing to be involved in fixing them himself or some sort of personal interactions?

A He did not suggest it to the advisers around him because they are powerless in having him do anything, but he was speaking as an expert on Russia. It's almost like Mr. Papadopoulos, but he was saying that it would be better if we can fix our relationship with Russia.

Q Do you recall any -- are you aware of any direct interactions between

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Dr. Page and Candidate Trump?

A I don't have any recollection of him reporting about him having a meeting. What I remember is that him -- not protesting, but not happy that he was not able to be meeting till that time with the Candidate.

Q Are you aware of any interactions between Dr. Page and senior New York-based campaign officials?

A The best I can remember is that Mr. Page interacted with Dr. Clovis. That, we know, he mentioned that element. I, at this point in time, do not remember, unless I'm refreshed, my memory is refreshed, of him reporting about him conducting meetings with anybody we could remember in New York, but he was based in New York.

Q Now, as you discussed, two of the five campaign foreign policy advisers that Candidate Trump announced to the Washington Post editorial board had expressed an interest in improving U.S. and Russia relations, did you attribute any significance to that fact, either at the time or later?

A So this is assessment, not direct testimony.

Q Understood.

A I have no information about why two and not five, so, obviously, the person who recruited us is the one who decided about who is going to be there, so we did not recruit them or each other.

Second, there was a difference between the way those two advisers thought of international relations and therefore relations with Russia and the rest of the other members. It was a philosophical difference. All of them were conservatives, for sure, but in terms of international relations, those who have served in the U.S. Government that you can see here or have served in the

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previous campaign, including Mr. Gordon, their view on Russia was that it is a hostile, especially some of them have worked during the Cold War, but then their view was not that we need to go and confront it because that is not their level to decide, versus the two individuals that you have mentioned, their view was that relations could be fixed, and it is better to have better relations.

Q I want to move a little bit to the chronology of the campaign, and we can come back as needed, but I just want to try to get through some of events you have described and described in your written materials.

Did you attend the foreign policy speech at the Mayflower in April of 2016?

A I did so, sir.

Q Do you recall whether Ambassador Kislyak was in attendance?

A All right. Let me be clear here. Until the Cleveland University meeting, I didn't know how he looked like physically, so at that meeting, at the foreign policy speech, I learned later that he was there.

Let me be even more precise. I learned at the end of the meeting, well, the Russia Ambassador was there and he was seated there, but I would not recognize him. I didn't know he was the Ambassador. So, yes, to answer your question, I learned towards the end of that meeting that the Russian ambassador was there.

Q And who did you, if anyone, do you recall seeing him interact with?

A At the hotel? At the --

Q At the Mayflower speech?

A Let me describe you what I saw. So we were seated -- this is front row, second row, third row. The advisers were seated in the third row. We were in that large auditorium, because J.D. was kind of organizing the media in the back. The media was about 20 cameras and a lot of -- and then VIPs, local VIPs,

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and we were in the front row of the VIPs, and then two rows that were reserved. They were empty.

Then at one point, those rows were filled by people coming from the right. I'm just giving you the details. So I recognized maybe one or two persons from the National Interest Review, but I did not recognize that the Russian Ambassador was in the front.

Rick Dearborn was in the front. I think Senator Sessions was in the front, and then near the podium from the back came at least two persons I could remember. One was Mr. Jared Kushner, he was there, came from the back, and another individual, I cannot remember who it was. Then the Ambassador -- the American Ambassador came, introduced Mr. Trump, then Mr. Trump came and delivered his speech.

After he delivered his speech, the two front rows left, and we were left with the media to deal with them. So that's the best description I can remember.

Q Right. And understanding that you didn't know who Ambassador Kislyak was at that time, now that you -- once you later learned who he was and what he looked like, do you recall him being -- do you recall seeing him there, or is that only due to reporting?

A Let me say this: It is very difficult to make a statement, but I'll make one. So once you see him in front of you or on TV, and you know who he was, then your memory is going to tell you, well, he was in the front row. So I'm going to tell you that my memory now tells me that it's very possible that he was one of the persons in the front row, but I cannot confirm that. That would be using the memory of after the event to go back and visit the event.

Q Understood. And when the front rows went wherever they went

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after the speech, you did not join them; is that correct?

A No, I did not. I was tasked actually to stay one more hour dealing with the media and the foundations.

Q Okay. Thank you. Moving on to the July -- your joint European Parliament congressional meeting. You mentioned earlier that you attended -- in your written materials you stated that Dr. Clovis responded very firmly and clearly that there will be no abandonment of NATO or over our European allies and no deal with President Putin at the expense of U.S.-European relations.

Did you perceive him to be, or did he state that he was articulating the position of the Trump campaign when he made that statement?

A All right. I was seated here, and we had lawmakers here, then they left, and then the delegation was -- the Trump foreign policy delegation was seated there, and then all the Europeans were seated here. I want to paint a little bit how the matter developed.

So the European lawmakers were asking very tough questions about the Trump campaign views on NATO and on Russia, and their main points were: We read a lot about the fact that your candidate is going to be closer to the Russians and less close to NATO. To which Clovis responded what I have quoted here that I can assure you, as someone who was in the U.S. military and who worked during the Cold War and back in NATO, that our candidate and our campaign is not going to do what you are saying it will do.

Now, having said that, do I have the knowledge of him expressing the high level of the campaign narrative or not, I don't know, but he is higher than me. So he had expressed exactly or maybe more than what I've quoted, but I have no way to answer how high it was.

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Q Right, but he was speaking as a campaign official or purporting to make the -- articulated the position of the campaign rather than just his personal views?

A Absolutely. He was -- I should say, yes, the best I can recollect, he was speaking on behalf of the campaign. He told them: I'm speaking on behalf of the campaign.

Q Now, Mr. Papadopoulos was also in attendance; is that right?

A Mr. Papadopoulos was, yes, seated next to Clovis.

Q Now, did he make any statements to the group about a Russia-U.S. relations or U.S.-European relations regarding Russia that you recall?

A All right. He did not speak in public during the exchange, no words, but I can report one thing is that he came to others. He was whispering his assessment of the response, and he came to me and said: I don't think what Clovis said represents exactly what the position should be. And I found it very normal because he has been, you know, promoting a different view.

Q And so, as you've described, Mr. Papadopoulos, perhaps, had a different view than the one that Dr. Clovis had articulated. Did you perceive or have any reason to believe that Mr. Papadopoulos' view was that of anyone other than himself?

A As far as I can remember it was his view, his opinion. I didn't hear it from anyone else, as far as I can remember, except Mr. Page -- Dr. Page, but he did not -- he was not as clear and dynamic as Mr. Papadopoulos.

Q So, also, in July, I believe, was the Republican National Convention in Cleveland. Did you -- were you in Cleveland during the RNC?

A Yes, sir, I attended the whole conference -- convention.

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Q And were you in Cleveland the week prior to the RNC during what's known as "Platform Week"?

A The week before, I was in Washington, D.C.

Q Did you have any role in crafting the platform with respect to Ukraine?

A First, physically, I was in Washington, D.C., so I wasn't at that discussion, and I don't have the power to be there. I'm not a delegate in the Republican party, so for all these questions together, I had zero role in crafting any of the matter related to that platform.

But I've heard, of course, being part of a team, what is happening, who is doing what. So I could say that I was aware of the general themes, and then, of course, Mr. Gordon reported to us later the episodes that occurred.

Q And can you just briefly describe what you recall, particularly from any verbal conversations that might not be reflected in email about the matter of the platform with respect to Ukraine that's subsequently been the subject of so much press reporting?

A Again and again, I'm going to try to go back to the raw information that I've heard directly from Mr. Gordon, and then because of the layers and layers of what was reported, I want to make sure that I report for the first role and then later on the actual information.

Mr. Gordon was reporting to myself and Tera Dahl that he was tasked to go ahead of all of us, and he was part of that discussion about the platform. He did not delve into details, but he said we had an issue with the stipulation on Ukraine. He had an issue. So we asked him what was that issue.

He said we had to change -- the language had to be changed maybe one or

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two times until it settled to what it is now in the Republican platform, what it was then when he spoke to us. And he mentioned that to us when we were at the convention. He said: Oh, my goodness, what a headache, you know, we had all these back and forth, and then it was settled.

Q Anything else you recall about that issue from the time, as opposed to what you learned later?

A I don't recall anything other than that conversation that he had with us about that specific issue of Ukraine.

Q Now, when you were at the convention, did you — did you attend the same event that Ambassador Kislyak also attended?

A I did.

Q And what was that?

A That was a panel organized by the State Department and the Heritage Foundation. I don't have the actual date in front of me, but we could get that date. It's publicized. Whereby there were two panels, one in the morning, one in the afternoon, and a lunch at noon, and there were about, according to the sources, there are 50 to more diplomats, including Ambassadors, and the Russian Ambassador, accordingly, was there.

The panel of the morning included J.D. Gordon. Then there was a lunch and a keynote speaker. That would be Senator Sessions. Then a lunch. Then the afternoon panel, which I was part of and KT McFarland was part of, and the gentleman from the Heritage Foundation was I think the moderator.

Q So it was a fairly large event panel. Did you have any direct one-on-one interactions with Ambassador Kislyak?

A Oh, no. Let me explain, though, unless you have another question.

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Q Yeah, I just -- I apologize. I mean, we can come back to it, but I just wanted to get through a few things.

So you don't have any direct interactions?

A Face-to-face with the Ambassador?

Q Right.

A I don't recall, and we've been asked by CNN that someone else said that you had a meeting, and I said I don't recall. And I had three persons with me wherever I moved, and they don't recall. Now, he could have been behind me speaking with somebody else and somebody must have imagined, because if I meet an Ambassador, I will say I met an Ambassador. Actually, I took many pictures with other Ambassadors.

Q Do you recall seeing any direct one-on-one interactions between Ambassador Kislyak and any Trump campaign personnel?

A I did not see myself, but I heard that others have spoken to him. So that's the difference between me seeing at the convention and what I've heard later.

Q And who do you recall hearing?

A Mr. Gordon actually mentioned that he had a very social moment. They were eating, I guess, and then he reported this to us.

Q Anyone other than Mr. Gordon?

A I don't recall. I don't recall. I don't want to say Carter Page also mentioned that, but I have a blank. I don't recall who else.

Q So quickly, in the time I have remaining, we just have a few standard questions that we pretty much ask everybody.

Did you personally collude, conspire, coordinate with the Russians to hack

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or disseminate any emails?

A No, I did not, sir.

Q Did you personally conspire, collude, or coordinate with the Russians to otherwise or in any way influence the outcome of the election?

A I did not.

Q Are you aware -- do you have any information that would demonstrate that Candidate Trump colluded, coordinated, or conspired with the Russians to hack or disseminate emails?

A I do not have such information.

Q Do you have any information that Candidate Trump colluded, coordinated, or conspired with the Russians to otherwise influence the outcome of the election?

A I don't have that information.

Q Do you have any information that anyone affiliated with the Trump campaign, in whatever capacity, colluded, conspired, or coordinated with the Russians to hack or disseminate emails?

A I don't have such information.

Q Do you have any information that anyone affiliated with the Trump campaign, in whatever capacity, coordinated, colluded, or conspired with the Russians to otherwise influence the outcome of the election?

A I don't have that information.

Q All right. That's all we have for this round. Would you like to take a brief break?

A I'd be happy, if I can.

Q Thank you.

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A Thank you.

[Recess.]

BY [REDACTED]

Q All right. Thank you very much. I'm the [REDACTED] for the minority side. I'm going to take over the questioning over here.

I wanted to start, you mentioned that you first met Mr. Papadopoulos, if I'm correct, at the meeting with then Candidate Trump on March 31st, but that you also may have received emails from Mr. Papadopoulos.

And if I can submit to you and also for the record an email that was sent from Mr. Papadopoulos on March 24th, 2016.

[The information follows:]

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[REDACTED] This would have been after March 21st when your name, along with Mr. Papadopoulos' name was mentioned by Candidate Trump to the Washington Post. That was on March 21st, 2016. And the meeting with then Candidate Trump was on March 31st, 2016.

[REDACTED] Is there a Bates number associated with that email?

[REDACTED] Yes. The Bates number is DJTFP00010111, as well as the next page, which is 112.

If I can point you to the second page?

MR. PHARES: I need glasses.

[REDACTED] Do you have another extra copy for us as well?

[REDACTED] Give me one second.

BY [REDACTED]

Q If I can point you to the second page.

A Okay.

Q So the second page, which is written by Mr. Papadopoulos on March 24, 2016, was written to several members of what appear to be the foreign policy advisory team, including Carter Page, Sam Clovis, Keith Kellogg, Berg Mizusawa, Chuck Kubic, Joseph Schmitz, and then [REDACTED] which I believe is your email; is that correct?

A That's correct.

Q And Michael Glassner, and the title of email is: "Meeting with Russian Leadership, including Putin."

And Mr. George Papadopoulos writes: "Good morning. I just finished a very productive lunch with a good friend of mine. Joseph Mifsud, the director of

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the London Academy of Diplomacy who introduced me to both Putin's niece" -- here he's speaking about the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, and the Russian Ambassador in London, who also acts as the deputy foreign minister.

The topic of the lunch was to arrange a meeting between us and the Russian leadership to discuss U.S.-Russia ties under President Trump. They are keen to host us in a quote "mutual" end quote city or directly in Moscow. They said the leadership, including Putin, is ready to meet with us, and Mr. Trump should be there -- or should there be interest. We need for everyone's thoughts in moving forward with this very important issue.

"Furthermore, Mifsud is good friends with the soon-to-be next Prime Minister of Vietnam. He asked for me to join him on a trip there to meet with the next leader. Perhaps this is of interest to the rest of the campaign team as well."

So the first question I just have is, you mentioned that you may have records in your own personal email from George Papadopoulos. Do you believe this may be one of them?

A I do know this is one of them.

Q Okay.

A That's the one I was mentioning.

Q Okay. Very good. Very helpful. You mentioned that you'd be willing to produce those to the committee.

A I would be willing to produce it to the committee.

Q Yes. Great. So it would be very helpful if there are -- this or any other emails that would have been from or would have included on the "cc" line or mentions Mr. Papadopoulos, or Carter Page, for that matter, would be very helpful to have.

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A Yes.

Q Thank you very much.

Now that you see this email, do you recall receiving and reading this email at the time?

A Let me explain it, because I saw it -- I was planning on explaining this email.

You know, on AOL, if you receive emails, they stay dark thick if you don't open them, and they would become clear when you actually open them. This is an email that I read way after I received it. So it was because we were receiving emails and emails, and that was one among them, and there are others as well.

But when I went back and read it, I realized that he had sent it before, but of course, now, I know that he had sent the email.

Q Do you know, roughly, when you would have read it and opened it for the first time?

A It should have been within weeks, but I don't remember exactly when.

Q But, presumably, after the meeting with the Candidate on March 31st?

A After March, yes.

Q And after your -- so that would also be after the lunch that you mentioned after the meeting with the Candidate where you discussed --

A In the best of my recollection, it should have been because had I read all that email before, of course I would have seen him in a different lens. But these are all the best I can recollect, of course.

Q Okay. Did you -- do you recollect -- do you recall whether or not you

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had any engagement with Mr. Papadopoulos after having read this email, and if so, did it color in any way your views of Mr. Papadopoulos' role on the campaign, why he was focused on Russia?

A Okay. To the best of how I remember, the first time I heard him phonetically talking about Russia was at the March 31st. Then I started to read this and other emails. And then when I heard him also after the meeting in that restaurant, I started to have a perception of what is or what were his priorities.

Q How did that strike you?

A As I said earlier in the meeting, I realized that his priority was the file of Russia, priority. I mean, you are ■ political scientist and you here somebody talking about Malaysia four or five times, you know that he is -- he or she would be interested in Malaysia. That's the example.

Q And I want to get to this period that you mentioned, the 2 weeks that you were present as part of the foreign policy advisory team at the office in Alexandria.

A Yes.

Q And then afterwards. But on the matter of Mr. Papadopoulos and these emails, do you recall any conversations with other members of the foreign policy advisory team who may have been on this email chain or were aware of the email, how they perceived it, how it was discussed amongst them, whether it was viewed as an asset or as a matter of concern?

A All the events between the moment we were appointed in the Washington Post, all the way till about -- till about mid or late spring, we were submitted to a river of emails and information and so many things to do, so I don't have a recollection in terms of chronology. But what I have a recollection of is

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that we were sitting, meeting in that executive office, a few of us, J.D., Tera Dahl, and myself, and we were assessing who is doing what.

We had what we call chats. And when we came to the discussion about Mr. Papadopoulos, at least the two of us, Gordon and myself, Tera was listening, you know, sort of exchanged the point of view that Mr. Papadopoulos is really interested in the Russia file -- Russia file in the sense Russia desk, Russia relations.

And that was -- and during those 2 weeks where I served in that executive office during those weeks.

Q And during that period, what was your perception of the role that Mr. Papadopoulos was playing, was perhaps authorized to play on behalf of the campaign?

A I was -- I remember now that I had a perception of what he wanted to do. I had no information as to what he was doing or if he was in communication with higher levels allowing him to do. That was not clear. But what was clear is that this is what he was seeking to do.

Q And can you describe a bit more what you were seeing him do, or at least what he was presenting to the campaign either through emails or in the meetings as what his role could be and who he was talking to?

A If we put it under one umbrella, should it be emails, including this one I read later, but other emails as well on private -- on the campaign server and the little discussions we had with him -- that would be at that lunch meeting -- he was focussing on the fact that he can -- he can -- he has connections and he could use those connections to open a path between the campaign and Russia. So that's his general attitude that he is the one who can do that.

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Q And when you had these discussions or this one discussion that you recall with Mr. Gordon about what various campaign surrogates were doing, including Papadopoulos, do you recall whether or not you had read this particular email, and did this email come up at all?

A The best of my recollection is that, by that time, I had been aware, including reading this email and also hearing from others, that this is what Mr. Papadopoulos is interested in, and Mr. Gordon smiled, meaning this is not what Mr. Gordon was interested in, meaning -- I have to describe it the best we can hear, that yes, yes, Mr. Papadopoulos wants to do that, but it's not taken seriously. That's my impression at the time, but by the people at the meeting. I have no knowledge of any other persons.

Q The reason I ask is because there's language in this email that is very suggestive -- the reason I ask is because there's language in this email that is very suggestive. A, it suggests that he has a clear conduit to the Russian leadership, including possibly to the Russian President, and that he was meeting to discuss specifically the meeting between -- a meeting between Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin.

But as I understand from your testimony today, those facts were not specifically discussed, did not raise -- were not specifically discussed as part of conversations that either you had or that you were aware of, and therefore, you may not be aware of any reaction to those very specific elements of that correspondence.

A As far as I can recall, this email, the other emails, and whatever Mr. Papadopoulos have said and we heard, as far as I can recall, I have not heard from much higher levels anything to ask us about them or how do we evaluate this

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except from Dr. Clovis.

When we met him and discussed that, my impression -- and this is not really a recollection of words -- is that Dr. Clovis wanted Mr. Papadopoulos out of his hair. This is an expression we could use. And the one -- the one name that made, in that meeting that you mentioned, Gordon smile was Putin's niece. He and Tera and I felt that he's a little bit exaggerating here when we discuss that.

[REDACTED] 1 minute.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Okay.

Your discussion with Mr. Gordon and then with Dr. Clovis that you mentioned, were those during that 2-week period where you were present in the Alexandria office, or is this subsequent?

A The best of my recollection was during, but it was also after. I mean, every time we would meet with Clovis, we'd go over a variety of issues, and then -- and I don't have quantitatively how many times, but at every time the Papadopoulos case was raised, both Clovis and J.D. would say: well, it's like dismissive, to we don't need that now. That's what their attitude was, but I don't remember the actual words that they have used, but that was my impression if you're asking me about.

Q Okay. I have a line of questioning about your experience and what you saw during your time in the office and what led you to leave the office, but given the amount of time left, I yield back to the majority, and I'll pick it up after. Thank you.

A Thank you.

BY [REDACTED]

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Q So we've talked about your time as ■ adviser during the campaign. Did you have any role in the Trump transition?

A No, I did not have any role in the Trump transition, and the administration, of course. My tenure ended on the morning of November 9.

Q And that was the morning after the election?

A The morning after the election.

Q Now, you did make reference to some events that took place in December in what you provided to us, and so that's what I'd like to ask you about now.

You mentioned a meeting in D.C. that you attended at the request of the U.S.-Arab Business Council, which was also attended by two Russian diplomats. Just to be clear, you were attending that meeting in your personal or some capacity other than on behalf of the Trump transition; is that correct?

A Yes. I could explain, yes, and I could explain further, if you wish me to.

Q Maybe we'll come back to it. But just the fact that you weren't representing -- or your statement is pretty straightforward, I think, that you weren't representing or otherwise acting on behalf of the Trump transition at this time?

A That's correct. I was representing himself as an expert.

Q And you mentioned there were two Russian diplomats who were there?

A Yes, sir.

Q Did you have sort of direct interactions with them?

A I did have direct interaction. It was ■ lunch at the Four Seasons, 1:00 p.m., and it was at the invitation of the -- this NGO that I have just mentioned,

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and at his request.

Q So you mentioned, in the written materials, that you discussed the situation in Syria, and of course, this is -- Syria is the location where there is an intersection between your expertise in the Middle East and U.S.-Russia relations, since both the United States and Russia have been deeply involved in the conflict in Syria.

I'm curious whether there was any discussion at this lunch of the, I believe then pending and Egypt-sponsored UN resolution regarding Israeli settlement?

A At that meeting?

Q At that meeting.

A I don't have any recollection of that subject being discussed at that meeting.

Q With the Russians or with anyone?

A With the Russians or the Arabs, that's true.

Q And you are a -- you have some expertise in Egypt; I believe traveled there at some point during the campaign.

Did you have any role whatsoever in President-elect Trump's interactions with the Egyptians regarding the December 2016 UN resolution on Israeli settlements?

A From November 9 onward, to now, I have had no communications, neither with the transition team, nor with the administration, except, within the transition team, the media person, Bryan Lanza was in touch with us because we were in a transition ourselves, the former advisers, he would tell us, for example, that when you make those statements, although you are former advisers and you are not in the transition, keep in mind, basically, that if you would be asked to

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serve, keep in mind those statements won't be reflecting later on. But it had no effect on my statements.

Q Thank you. And just to be clear, then, the answer is "no" to the question of whether you had any interaction with or knowledge of the -- or participation in or knowledge of the Trump campaign's interactions with Egypt -- or Egyptian officials regard the UN resolution on Israeli settlements?

A I haven't had any interaction on that issue.

Q And in December of 2016, did you have any interactions of any kind that you recall with General Flynn?

A In December of 2016, I had no, as far as I can remember, interaction with General Flynn.

Q Now, you also provided us some copies or text versions of emails concerning a potential meeting with the Ambassador to the United States from Russia, Kislyak. The first one that you produced is dated December 13, and reads: I write to you on behalf of Russian Ambassador to clarify the opportunity to arrange a meeting between him and you.

Now, in English, "clarify" would usually give the implication that there had been some prior communication on this topic. It seems that Mr. Shevchenko (ph), who authored this email, may not be a native English speaker, so I don't want to read too much into his particular word choice.

But before you got this email, had you had any prior discussion with Mr. Shevchenko (ph) or anyone else about a meeting between you and the Russian Ambassador Kislyak?

A This was the first email I received, first to my website, then to my assistant's, and I had not had any meeting with either the Ambassador or any

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diplomats of the mission in the United States during the campaign, and even before the campaign.

And I -- since you mention the narrative, we reproduced the email as is, and there is some English mistakes towards the end that we did not correct.

Q And Mr. Shevchenko's (ph) signature block indicates he's the first secretary of the political section. At the time you got this email, did you have any -- did you know who he was?

A At the time I received the email, I did not know who he was.

Q Had you ever met him, that you recall?

A So that's the first email. No, I did not meet with that person. I met with the other persons, the attaches. No, I have not had any knowledge of him before.

Q Right. Did you have any suspicion that he might not in fact be a diplomat and might in fact be acting on behalf of the intelligence services?

A I did have such suspicion as far as I can remember.

Q And did the -- what you produced to us does not reflect a reply directly to the December 13 email.

Did you, in fact, make such a reply, or did the reply come only after he reached out to your assistant on the 19th?

A Can you clarify? I'm a little bit lost about the sequences.

Q So there's an email from Mr. Shevchenko (ph) to the email address at your website on December 13. I guess I could first ask: When did you first become aware of this email?

A I don't recall exactly when, but we became aware, and it was forwarded to my assistant.

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Q And then did you or anyone on your where behalf make any reply to Mr. Shevchenko (ph) before there was a email from him to your assistant on the 19th?

A I don't recall, but I assume that she had answered him, and this is a part of the conversation. Is that your question?

Q Well, I apologize if I'm not being clear.

A Please.

Q What you gave us -- and again, these are word reproductions, but is an email from Mr. Shevchenko (ph) to you on December 13.

A To my website, yeah.

Q And then the next communication is an email from Mr. Shevchenko (ph) addressing Rebecca (ph) on December 19th.

A Yes. Okay.

Q And so my question is: Between December 13th and 19th, was there any reply or communication from either you or from Rebecca to Mr. Shevchenko (ph)?

A I can certainly check with Rebecca (ph) if she had answered in between those two dates. I don't have any recall myself that I have responded.

Q And the 19th includes -- the email on the 19th addressed to Rebecca (ph) reflects: We're doing a request. This time it's to arrange a meeting between you and Alexi Skosyrev, S-k-o-s-y-r-e-v. Had you ever meet Alexi before?

A I don't remember, the best of my remembrance, I had met with him.

Q And between December 19th and December 29th, did either you or Rebecca (ph) make any reply or response to this offer?

A That, I can ask Rebecca (ph), because I am not aware of every detail

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between her and him. What I asked her to reproduce is what did they want from us, what did we tell them.

But if you want, I could go and ask her were there any other email between the 19th and 29th; were there any other email between me and Rebecca (ph) about it between the 19th and 29th, but I don't have it.

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[1:27 p.m.]

BY [REDACTED]

Q And these invitations, did you perceive them as being addressed to you in your personal capacity or being addressed to you as a recent Trump campaign adviser, someone who advised the now or then-President-elect?

A Now, that's assessment and not knowledge, because they never mentioned this to me.

Q Right.

A The assessment is I am known to them because I am in the media as an expert, so they know that I have posted, spoken, addressed the issue in Syria and in Iraq and in the areas they're interested in.

And I assume -- this is only assessment -- that, of course, having served in a Presidential campaign, though I left, I am still in the orbit. So I am just assuming that for those two reasons they wanted to speak with me.

Q So it could have been both, as far as you know, both your academic expertise and your recent role in the campaign?

A That's right.

Q The only reply in the last communication you provided to us is from Rebecca (ph) to Mr. Shevchenko (ph), December 29th. It is a request to postpone the meeting in light of the expulsion of Russian diplomats until you, Dr. Phares, obtained clear guidance from the transition.

Can you speak to what interactions you had with the transition regarding these potential meetings?

A It's going to be very simple: None. I actually did not reach out to the transition to ask. And I told her, we don't want to continue on this path.

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Because I thought if there would be later on anybody reaching out to me, then I will talk about it. But I preferred that we're not going to engage in neither any meeting nor engaging with anybody at this point in time.

Q Right. So the postpone -- so her statement that you'd postponed the meeting to obtain guidance from the transition, was that her understanding of what was going to happen, or was that an excuse to sort of get out of the meeting?

A That was an excuse to get out of the meeting, as far as I can remember, because I had a conversation with her. And without her telling them, no, we don't want or anything negative, tell her we postpone but we're not going to have a meeting.

Q Right.

A To the best of my recollection.

Q So that excuse or that reason for her -- for postponing, that you needed to obtain guidance from the transition, that was your idea that you instructed her to make that response?

A It was my idea, yes, sir.

Q Now, the email, it begins, "I'm so sorry to hear about the expulsion of your diplomats today."

Reading that without context, are you saying that -- should we take that as you disagreed with the outgoing Obama administration's decision to expel the diplomats, or you were just trying to be courteous and professional?

A The best I can answer you, but it's clear in my mind, that that instruction, she did it, because he was pounding and calling and pounding. So she got the instruction from me that I don't want delay, I don't want. So she crafted that matter.

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Q So the statement, "I'm so sorry to hear about the expulsion of your diplomats today," was something she developed on her own initiative rather than a statement or a sentiment that you directed her to convey?

A Yes, clearly.

Q Is that also true for the statement, "It is my fervent hope that tensions between our two nations will relax after January 20th"?

A That's correct. That's Rebecca's (ph) statement and email. And I was actually not very comfortable with it, but she had the discretion to delay and delay, so she used that terminology.

[REDACTED] Time.

[REDACTED] Thank you.

MR. PHARES: Thank you.

[REDACTED] Do you need to take a break, or are you okay to keep going?

MR. PHARES: I am good. I am good.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Thank you.

I just actually would like first to circle back to Mr. Papadopoulos very quickly just so I exhaust those questions and we can move forward.

Were you able to read the guilty plea that Mr. Papadopoulos pled to and was filed with the District Court for the District of Columbia in October of 2017?

A I read portions of it. If you need me to comment on any specific, I'll be happy to read.

Q Sure. Let me read an excerpt very briefly. And the questions relate to your potential knowledge about that information, but also any knowledge you may have had from hearing or discussing with others on the campaign.

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So paragraph 14 of this statement of the offense reads that on or about April 26, 2016, Defendant Papadopoulos met the professor -- the professor has been later identified to be Joseph Mifsud, who was referenced in the earlier email that you received on March 31st of 2016 -- for breakfast at a London hotel.

During this meeting, the professor told Defendant Papadopoulos that he had just returned from a trip to Moscow where he had met with high-level Russian Government officials.

The professor told Defendant Papadopoulos that on that trip he, the professor, learned that the Russians had obtained, quote, dirt, unquote, on then-candidate Clinton.

The professor told Defendant Papadopoulos, as Defendant Papadopoulos later described to the FBI, that, quote, they -- and he meant the Russians -- have dirt on her, end quote, her being Hillary Clinton. Quote, the Russians had emails of Clinton, end quote. And the last quote is, they have thousands of emails, end quote.

Listening to this now or if you read it prior, do you recall becoming aware of any information that could be similar to what Mr. Papadopoulos has pled guilty to in the course of your time on the campaign, from your conversations since leaving the campaign, but with individuals that may have been associated with the campaign?

A The best I can recollect was that Papadopoulos was firmly pressuring Dr. Clovis to either allow him to go to Russia and other places or have him go with other advisers. And I was even, I think, mentioned in -- by Clovis. He'd asked me, how about going with Mr. Papadopoulos on trips? My view was not Russia. It was Egypt or Israel or Cyprus. And then I told Clovis, I have no

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interest in that trip.

Q Why was that?

A Because of my perception of Mr. Papadopoulos. Now we know, of course, this happened 1 year later, but I was not comfortable, first of all, to go to Russia because of what I've explained. My position is, I'm not going to be welcome in Russia.

Second is, I didn't know what kind of relations he had with Israel, with Egypt, with Cyprus. And when I'm not aware and I don't know what it is and I cannot confirm, I don't go. I don't engage.

Now, the issue of the emails, obviously, I learned about it from when the investigation started. And I tried to recall in any meeting or even emails that the campaign had or members of the campaign, if I can recall him mentioning either dirt or email. My memory doesn't tell me that I recall any of that package of emails and dirt.

Q So this would include conversations that may have happened during your time prior to the election as well as any conversations you have had since?

A I'm trying to remember if -- when the Papadopoulos issue started to be in the media, then, of course, I started to learn more and we started to ask around. But we did not get more than what the statement -- this statement and the media has uncovered. I don't recall. I don't recall this --

Q But even following the publication of this statement of the offense and any conversations you may have had, to your --

A With members of the campaign?

Q Right. To your knowledge, have you spoken to anybody that may have evinced prior knowledge of the information that's in here?

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A I don't recall I've had any conversation focusing on the email or any related matters that you have mentioned.

Q Okay. On the issue of his trips and Mr. Clovis' offer or attempt to get others, including possibly you, to join him on trips, was it your understanding at the time that Mr. Clovis and potentially others on the campaign were aware that he was traveling to various or seeking to travel to various places in his capacity as a campaign surrogate?

A To the best of my recollection from conversations I had with Dr. Clovis, the general attitude -- because that attitude is important to determine the conversation. He felt that Mr. Papadopoulos was doing things beyond what he, Dr. Clovis, or the campaign wanted to do. He was too active in that direction.

And I use a term that Dr. Clovis may have -- not may, has mentioned -- which is out of my hair.

So when I read the emails, the emails look formal, but what is behind the emails in my conversation with Clovis is we don't want that. But in his emails, he, as far as I can remember, okay, go plan whatever you want and let me know.

But I don't think, from what I know, and I don't know everything, that he told him, George, go, organize, come back, and I'll green light you. That's not what I understood. I understood that, okay, go and see what you want to do, but tell me.

Q So I'm trying to reconcile that impression that you had with the conversation you mentioned where Mr. Clovis sought your assistance in joining Mr. Papadopoulos on international trips.

A Yes.

Q It would suggest that if Mr. Clovis was seeking out other campaign surrogates to join Mr. Papadopoulos rather than telling Mr. Papadopoulos outright,

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"You are not to travel on behalf of the campaign or act as a surrogate on the campaign," that there was knowledge of his travels and a degree of at least acquiescence to Mr. Papadopoulos' activity internationally.

And when you compare that with the public record of Mr. Papadopoulos traveling to Israel, for example, and speaking publicly, at least the appearance of speaking publicly on behalf of the campaign and being quoted in local press on behalf of the campaign, we're just trying to understand and reconcile the email threads that we've seen, but also the public record of what actually occurred.

A I fully understand what you're trying to understand. I'm going to do my best to explain the part where I heard and engaged. Because what I cannot help with is -- are the conversations between Dr. Clovis and Mr. Papadopoulos.

Where I cannot help with is what -- when Mr. Papadopoulos eventually got connected to New York. And that's another chapter that I learned about in September, that he was active with Mr. Bannon on Egypt. So for all these 6 months, I had no idea that he was actually even connected.

So to answer with focus, my conversations with Dr. Clovis was that Dr. Clovis was bothered by these multiple requests. What did he tell Papadopoulos, I don't know what did he tell.

The emails I saw, on the face of them, yes, go prepare a trip or let me know before you go to prepare a trip, could be read in two different ways. It's instructions to go prepare, or it's, give me a break, go prepare and then we'll tell you no.

I am, I think, from what I know and I heard from Dr. Clovis, I think it's B, B, that he was not interested but he would tell him to go prepare. And I understand when you mentioned that he could have told him no. He could have. I don't

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know why he did not tell him firmly no.

Q And if I can just pick up on your mention about Mr. Papadopoulos' activity with Steve Bannon in New York on Egypt, and apologies if I wasn't here for that portion of your earlier testimony, what timeframe was it that you learned of this?

A In September. It should have been in the month of September 2016.

Q And this was during the United Nations General Assembly?

A Probably towards the end. Probably. I'm trying to recollect the best I can.

Q And this was communications or activity or engagement between Mr. Papadopoulos and Mr. Bannon that preceded September?

A That preceded the meeting between the candidate and Egyptian President.

Q Which was on the margins of the U.N. General Assembly?

A Yes. When President Sisi came, he met with Clinton and met with Trump. There was a whole effort that I've heard about later to prepare that meeting, the same way when he prepared the meeting -- they prepared the meeting with the Mexican President. So there was that effort.

What I didn't know at the time is that the team that was actually preparing the minutia of the meeting were Mr. Bannon and Papadopoulos. I haven't heard about Papadopoulos for many months, not what he was doing.

Q And how did you hear this?

A From the Egyptians.

Q From the Egyptians?

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A From the Egyptian diplomats.

Q And can you share with us, to the extent that you're aware, what that preparation meant in practice? So was there travel involved, phone calls, meetings, papers produced that you may have learned about?

A The best of my recollection was that I spoke with a diplomat of the Egyptian Embassy, with whom I will speak all the time and even from before the campaign, and I asked him, how did that happen? How did the -- by curiosity. So he said, well, Mr. Bannon and Mr. Papadopoulos traveled from New York to Washington to the embassy, and they set all the details for such a meeting.

Q And this would have been in the weeks or a week or so -- I don't know if you know the timeframe -- prior to the meeting?

A It should have been logically, because if they came to prepare for the summit for that meeting, it should have been before.

Q And in learning of that, did you speak to anybody about that on the campaign after the fact?

A I don't recall I spoke to anybody except one person, that's Tera Dahl.

Q Okay. After learning of that, did you learn of any other information about Mr. Papadopoulos' role in potentially other meetings or on the campaign more broadly during that period? So if I understand your testimony correctly, there was a period until September where he may have dropped off at least your radar screen?

A My radar.

Q He then comes back again on your radar screen through this information you received from the Egyptians. After that, but prior to the election, were you aware of any other role that he played or communications he had?

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A To the best of my recollection -- and let's keep in mind that it was so intense, we were under the pressure of a lot of information coming in -- I don't recall who informed me, but what I've learned is that he was in connection with Mr. Bannon to work on Orthodox communities in America.

Q You mean Orthodox Christian?

A Christian Orthodox communities.

Q Any idea what that means in practice?

A It -- that's -- now, I'm explaining, so --

Q No. No. Or what it meant in practice.

A Oh.

Q Like, what was this proposal? If you could flesh out, to the extent that you're aware?

A Well, the one sentence that I've learned was something like, not exactly the words, that George now is working with New York traveling to the inlands, to various places, to --

Q You mean within the United States?

A Within the United States, hinterland, to work with or on American Orthodox. What would that mean, American Orthodox? Greeks, Slavs, Arab Orthodox, from these communities, for their votes.

██████████ One minute.

BY █████

Q For a get-out-the-vote campaign of some kind?

A That's correct.

Q Anything else that you became aware of regarding Mr. Papadopoulos' relationship with those in New York, specific individuals beyond

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Mr. Bannon he may have been in touch with?

A I don't have any information or recollection of anything beyond what I have mentioned.

Q Okay. Are you aware or were you aware of any other trips that Mr. Papadopoulos made during his tenure -- or prior to the election of 2016, I should say? I mentioned, for example, press reports indicate he traveled to Israel.

A The same information that was published and then discussed among Gordon, Tera Dahl, and myself, that's the extent of what I've learned about his trips.

Q Okay. And anything about his relationship with Mr. Flynn? Were you told that he may be in touch with or conversed with Mr. Flynn?

A At this point, I don't recall any information about Mr. Papadopoulos' interaction with General Flynn.

Q During the entire tenure until the end of the election?

A Yeah, throughout the entire.

Now, if I am shown, let's say, a group email where he mentioned I didn't pay attention, I could confirm or infirm (ph). But my memory doesn't tell me any matter about this issue.

Q Thank you for your help.

A Well, thank you.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Thank you, Dr. Phares. Again, my name is [REDACTED] I'm counsel with the majority side.

I notice in your written statement you said, quote, "I do not presently recall

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having met with or talked to persons I knew to be Russian officials, agents, or nationals with respect to activities occurring between January 1st, 2014, and November 8th, 2016, in connection with my involvement in the Trump Presidential campaign."

You also say later in that statement, quote, "My work on the campaign was precisely to field contacts from foreigners," end quote.

A From, sorry?

Q From foreigners.

A Yes.

Q You testified earlier, I believe, that you didn't know Ambassador Kislyak was at the Mayflower Hotel meeting until the end of that meeting when someone mentioned that.

I believe you also testified in your statement that you shook hands with the Ukrainian Ambassador to the U.S. during the RNC Convention in Cleveland, correct?

A That's correct, sir.

Q What other foreigners did you -- from whom did you field contacts?

A Where and when?

Q During -- from your period here you said -- let's take it from the moment you became affiliated with the campaign, so March -- third week of March 2016 until November 9th.

A That will be a long list. If we can take the map I could go --

Q And I'm just looking for countries, you know, names, to the extent you -- I mean, I'm not expecting a full --

A No. No. No. Of course. I'll just give you the -- and then if you

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want the menu --

Q Yes.

A -- I could go and back.

So from this hemisphere: Colombia, Argentina, ambassador, ambassador, deputy foreign minister of Argentina. Moving to Europe: Spain, Britain, France, Denmark, Norway, Italy, and then Czech Republic, Estonia.

And I'm mentioning here, but, of course, when I went to Europe there were dozens of members of Parliament.

Q Of course.

A So pretty much a large number of European Parliament. And I'm the co-secretary general of a legislative organization that has members from 27, so it would be a very exhaustive list.

Q And would you classify each of those contacts you just laid out as in your role as an adviser to the campaign?

A I want to make a distinction here. Thank you for the question.

Q By all means.

A As a secretary general of the transatlantic group, it is my mission to engage with all these lawmakers. But there were some diplomats that we can get a list from, my assistant, who made a request to meet me as a foreign policy adviser but in the United States.

And, for example, diplomats from South Korea, from Taiwan, from Japan, from Tunisia, during the campaign made an appointment with me to speak to me as a foreign policy adviser in Washington, D.C. So I could get you the list of those who requested that meeting.

And then I could get you the most comprehensive list with whom I

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interacted. That would also include Tunisians, Egyptians, all the way -- Bangladeshi, Indonesia. So it is a comprehensive list.

Q I was going to say, I tried to keep count in my head as you were going through, and I lost count pretty quickly.

A My head -- that is why I am so tired, I always feel so tired because of all these --

Q Early mornings and late nights?

A That's right, sir.

Q Okay. That's all I have, so I will yield.

A Thank you, sir.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Thank you.

So I think we've covered any knowledge you may have had about Papadopoulos' international trips and contacts with campaign officials, including Mr. Bannon. Anything else that you may recall on those two subjects?

I ask in light of what you mentioned about Mr. Clovis seeking to have campaign surrogates join Mr. Papadopoulos. Are you aware of any other --

A Other surrogates?

Q -- any other surrogates that may have joined him on some trips?

A Any other surrogates joining him on some trips, I don't recall. And I don't remember if I even knew then if -- you know, meaning going with George to those places.

As far as Mr. Papadopoulos speaking to other advisers or surrogates about his plans, I don't have direct information, but I surmise that he must have spoken

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with many people.

Q Any idea who he may have been ■ frequent or relatively frequent communicator with on the campaign? So as you mentioned -- you mentioned the possibility that he was speaking to other surrogates.

A I can, to answer this question, I could go back and say that I was aware that he spoke with Dr. Clovis. Dr. Clovis spoke to me about his conversations with him. I was aware that J.D. Gordon spoke with him.

And during those luncheons that the group had, he was speaking to all of the members who were around the table. And then at the meeting in Congress he was silent. He was pretty much silent. Though after the meeting was over, when I was dealing with officials, I saw him speaking to -- or trying to speak to other people.

Q And when was this meeting?

A In my report -- I don't have a copy of my report, but it should be -- it's the July 14 or 15 meeting in Congress between the members of the EU Parliament and the Members of the U.S. Congress and other NGOs.

Q It says in your submission July 12th, 2016?

A Yes, July 12th, as far as I can remember.

Q Do you recall any interaction between him and Mr. Carter Page?

A As far as I can recall -- though it must be a little bit peculiar answer because both are said to have that same interest -- I don't recall either seeing them or hearing what they were discussing.

Q Okay. If I can go back to the foreign policy adviser team in Alexandria.

A Yes. Uh-huh.

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Q Can you describe the 2-week period that you mentioned where you were physically located? Who was in the office? How was it structured? What was the purpose of the work? And then, ultimately, why did you end up leaving that office or doing your work from elsewhere, however you want to characterize it?

A Okay. So to the best of my recollection, I got two conversations about joining this office. The direct conversation I had was with J.D. Gordon, who seemed to be somewhat tasked by -- he didn't tell me who -- but tasked by some authority to form that team and to invite us to go there. So that was one conversation.

The other conversation, which was very brief, was Mr. Jared Kushner, because I conversed with him on the phone. And he had even told me before Mr. Gordon that there is going to be an office. We're thinking about having an office in Washington. Why don't you join that office? Because I was making my activities from my own office.

So these were the two requests or the two connections for me to head to the office. So I made a decision, okay, let me try to see what would that be to work in an office, organized office.

So I went there. The office, first of all, had codes and had cards, not everybody could go in, how do you call them, the security cards, and they were only given to individuals who were authorized. Which means out of this whole group, only Mr. Gordon and myself had the cards to go in. The other members were not allowed to go in.

Then there were the staff. The staff was, on the top, Rick Dearborn; below him, John Mashburn; and then below the two of them, one line was J.D., one line

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was me, and then another line -- two lines with a gentleman who dealt with congressional liaison, and one person was assigned the outreach to communities for purpose of election, but ethnic communities.

So I went there, and Mr. Dearborn requested they're going to be there, that we need to be there from 9 to 5 everyday. So I attended. What did we do in that office? Basically we got one morning meeting with Mr. Dearborn where he will talk about the campaign, and then he will assign J.D. and Mashburn tasks to do. And then J.D. and I and Tera will meet to see where we are in terms of foreign policy and outreach. And that was for the 2 weeks.

Now, I have a large network of outreach to media. It's my work, both international and national. I asked Rick Dearborn, is there any conflict between me outreaching to media and me being in that office? He said, yes, there is a conflict, but let me ask how we're going to resolve that conflict. And I told him, it needs to be resolved because my income comes from the media, and I am -- that's -- that's why I am in the campaign, because I can speak to the media.

So we went back and forth, back and forth until the moment where he said, it's going to be difficult. If you want to do media, we can't -- you can't be in an executive branch here -- executive office. So I told him, thank you. I gave him my pass, and I left.

Q And how did that affect the surrogacy work that you did for the campaign?

A I am still trying to figure it out now, but to the best of my recollection, when I was within the office, the communication with the leadership in New York was easier. I was part of that chain of command or communications.

When I left the office, that communication ceased. So I kept my initial

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communications directly with New York when needed and directly with J.D. Gordon to inform me about -- the same way he informed the other advisers. I was pretty much on my own in my office.

Q And during that time period, could you describe to us the constellation of individuals who were part of the core nucleus in New York?

A When I was in that office?

Q Yeah. You mentioned there were direct communications to New York?

A To the best of my recollection, it's Rick Dearborn who was really the guy who controlled the office. He was the only one who wanted to be and was in communication with New York, not the other individual. It was pretty tight.

So he was in touch in New York principally with Steven Miller, the speechwriter. It was the most back and forth. And sometimes Mr. Miller would send a group email including Rick Dearborn and all of us on contents, not on operational matters. For example, he will send us a request, what do you think we should include in a statement on this or other subject?

Then there were other names that I don't remember from New York. Then there was also Hope Hicks. She was part of that hierarchy. And at one point -- multiple points -- Mr. Dearborn was in touch with Mr. Manafort when he was the co -- the manager or the executive director of the campaign.

Q Okay. Very helpful.

If I can go back to the preparations for the meeting with the Egyptian President --

A Yes.

Q -- in September. I'd like to produce as an exhibit an email exchange

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that ultimately included Jared Kushner, Mike Flynn, Steve Bannon, but it originates from an email from you.

A Oh.

[The information follows:]

\*\*\*\*\* INSERT 3-1 \*\*\*\*\*

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BY [REDACTED]

Q And let me read the Bates number. It's DJTFP00023871.

A Thank you.

Q You can read it in reverse order.

A Like this? Okay. Reverse order.

Q Yes, from the last two pages.

A Okay.

Q So this is an email from you to Ivanka on September 18, 2016.

A Uh-huh.

Q I'm going to read a few excerpts from it.

A Yes.

Q You write, "Just to inform you" -- "you" being Ivanka -- "that I" -- "I" being Walid Phares -- "traveled to Egypt last week, worked with them on the meeting between President Sisi and your father (as I mentioned to you weeks ago), then coordinated with General Flynn for him to coordinate in New York. Great that the meeting will take place tomorrow. This is a major victory in foreign policy. It will generate more votes."

The next paragraph deals with a potential meeting that you explore with the Argentinean President Macri.

Was it in your conversations with the Egyptians in Egypt that you became aware of a separate, what appears to be a separate preparatory track between Mr. Bannon and Mr. Papadopoulos, or was it here in Washington that you learned of this?

A To the best of my recollection, it was here in Washington. And it

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was after --

Q Subsequent to your trip to Egypt?

A Subsequent to my trip, yes, sir.

Q So just so we understand the exact timeline of events, you traveled to Egypt. Was this on behalf of the campaign? On your own? Was there a request to set up this meeting with the Egyptian President?

A So let me give you the chain. That could help us probably, if that's helpful.

Q Please.

A So in September I traveled to Egypt. I was supposed to travel in July, but in July I was in Europe. And I wanted -- it was initiated by me -- to meet with the Minister of Religious Affairs -- it was published actually -- and the Deputy Pope of the Copts, and to get information about the ideological, counterradicalization, counterextremism. It was not on behalf of the campaign. The only person who had to know was Dr. Clovis.

So I went there, not knowing what was happening actually here. While there, I was informed by Egyptian officials -- of course, they know me because I've traveled the year before, et cetera -- that there is something in preparation, but I was asked, we're not sure about when this is going to happen and -- sorry.

Q Please.

A -- and if you can contact anybody in the campaign just to ensure that this meeting is happening, et cetera, et cetera.

So I left Egypt. Back -- on the way back to London I had a seminar in London. I communicated with General Flynn. I couldn't communicate with anybody else at the beginning. And I tried to communicate with Bannon through

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Tera Dahl -- now I remember those two -- telling them that the Egyptians are telling me that they don't know even where and how the meeting is going to take place.

This explains what I was trying to tell Ivanka, but not the best way you could explain. I was telling Ivanka, oh, I met with them and et cetera. But what had happened in reality is that they told me that the meeting will take place, we don't have information.

So I communicated with Flynn, and Flynn told me, okay, I'll talk with the team. I'll talk with the team. And from there on, he took it, he and Bannon and everybody else, so I was not following up.

Q And you returned to Washington, D.C.?

A I did, yes.

Q And had conversations about -- with the Egyptian mission here, I presume, where it was disclosed to you by them that, in fact, Mr. Bannon and Mr. Papadopoulos were involved in coordinating this meeting? Is that correct?

A Let me clarify a little bit. I will consult my memoir, my memory.

I am not sure if the Egyptians in Washington -- I mean, in the States -- informed me about the fact that there was another track actually working on it, if it was before the meeting between the two principals or after that. That I am not sure.

But what happened is that I was in touch with the Egyptian diplomats who are my friends here, and they told me everything is being taken care of, we are in touch with everybody in New York.

So there was that lapse of a time where between the embassy here and the government there, when they met me and said we don't have any information, I

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told them I'm not here on an official mission, but I can make that phone call and email to Flynn and the rest.

[REDACTED] One minute, [REDACTED]

BY [REDACTED]

Q And in your conversation with Mr. Flynn, was there any indication that Mr. Flynn was aware of Mr. Papadopoulos' role?

A That's a good question, if I may say, because to the best of my understanding, until now I don't know who was communicating with who in New York because I haven't been to New York to their headquarters.

But now I can connect, like you would be able to, that my conversation with Flynn was general -- they're coming, they're upset, they don't know anything, what can you do? And he said, I'll take it from here with the team.

What that meant, and I learned it from Tera Dahl later, is that they spoke about it among themselves. And that would include probably Flynn and Bannon.

[REDACTED] That's time.

[REDACTED] Okay. We'll continue this after. Thank you.

[REDACTED] Do you need a break or anything?

MR. PHARES: I am good so far, unless you need a break.

[REDACTED] I am good.

Fifteen more minutes.

BY [REDACTED]

Q So the rest of this email that we were discussing until now, there is a chain of emails that begins with Ivanka Trump, the person who you addressed, forwarding your email to her husband --

A Uh-huh.

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Q -- Jared Kushner.

A Can you tell me just where is that? What page?

Q So this would be -- if you see on the second-to-last page, there is an email from Ivanka Trump --

A Yeah.

Q -- on Monday September 19th.

[REDACTED] It's on 23857.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Yeah, 23875.

A Oh, 75. Okay, yeah.

Q Then if you go to the page preceding that, 23874, there's an email from Jared Kushner to Rick Dearborn, cc'ing three people, Steve Bannon, David Bossie, and Mike Flynn.

And Mr. Kushner says, "Rick -- we need to shut this guy down." This guy being you.

A Uh-huh.

Q "I don't know why he is running around the world and meeting with world leaders on our behalf. I am told he doesn't check out that well and this could hurt us. He is good on TV. This is dangerous and misleading to outside countries. DJT has been clear that he wants a limited pool of people meeting with limited foreign governments.

"General Flynn -- happy to give you the intel I have gotten live, but I have heard that him calling around on our behalf has scared off several countries."

Steve Bannon, who you mentioned was perhaps already engaged with the Egyptians on a separate track --

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A Now this is your question? Now you're --

Q No. No. Now -- yeah. I'm going to the -- I'm just walking through the emails.

A Okay.

Q So 23874, the same page.

A Okay.

Q If you just go up a tiny bit you'll see Steve Bannon responding. He says, "Agree 1000 percent."

And then you have to go to the preceding page, and you have to keep going to the preceding page before that.

Mr. Mike Flynn writes, "Shut him down. He is not a good spokesperson and he should not speak as though he is talking for DT." DT being Trump. "Completely agree."

And then right above that, Mr. Kushner writes, "Rick," addressing Rick Dearborn, "I would explain that he is an advisor and not a diplomatic and we would appreciate him keeping you abreast of his communications before he has them and get approval before speaking with foreign governments or their representatives."

Rick Dearborn, right above that, responds and says, "I can reach out to him and deliver that message. He left on good terms."

And then if you go to the preceding page, this would be 23871, Mike Flynn writes, "Rick, jumping in here again. Thank him and let him know the team in New York City will handle all the diplomatic contacts unless otherwise directed. He means well, but he clearly needs to keep things much more discreet."

Jared Kushner then writes, this is all on September 19th, 2016, "Spoke with

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Walid and he is okay now."

In light of this chain, there are a few questions I have for you.

A Yes.

Q One question is, reading the email that is on page 23874 from Jared Kushner after being forwarded your correspondence with Ivanka Trump suggests that there has been clear direction from Donald Trump himself that, quote, "He wants a limited pool of people meeting with limited foreign governments," period.

Were you ever made aware of that direction from then-candidate Donald Trump?

A At what time in the campaign are we talking about? In September?

Q So this is in September.

A Right.

Q Purely based on this information, were you ever made aware during any time in your tenure of a direction coming straight from the candidate, Mr. Trump, as to who could travel abroad and who could meet with foreign governments?

A In answering this question, to the best of my assessment, first of all, there are some emails that I have not seen before --

Q Understood.

A -- that I am seeing now.

Q Yes.

A They were two conversations about the subject, but I have not received any written or direct communication, neither by candidate Trump or below him, about what should I do and I can do and not.

So in the first few months, we're talking March till about July, I would

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actually meet and speak and go on TV. And there is one quote here, "He is good on TV," but not go beyond that.

Q Understood.

A Okay. Then I had two conversations, one was with Mr. Jared Kushner at one point in July where -- July or maybe end of June or July, I don't recall, before the convention -- where he said, when you speak with diplomats, do not commit -- do not commit on behalf of the campaign.

And I told him, I have a long experience, and I've met with diplomats before even the campaign. When I meet with them, it's basically to explain what the agenda is, what the platform is, and explain it via TV and then when they request to meet with me and they asked me specifically about one, two, three, I respond. I do not commit with them and discuss future matters. And he was okay.

Then a second wave came in September, and now I see the disconnected information that I did not have. What they didn't know was that I was not going on behalf of the campaign. And you can read from the email that some governments or some diplomats told them, oh, what is Walid Phares saying?

It means those governments or those diplomats or maybe people who may dislike me told them, Phares is speaking on your behalf. And I was very strict in my discourse that I'm not speaking on any behalf. Actually I published posts about my trips saying this is private, this is not on behalf.

So probably -- I don't understand how that happened. Flynn reported to Jared and Ivanka reported to Jared, so Jared called me.

Q And that is the phone call that appears --

A At the end.

Q -- Mr. Kushner appears to acknowledge --

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A Yes.

Q -- in the -- on September 19th at 9:09 a.m.?

A Enigma resolved.

Q Okay. But going back to that one statement that is in the email from Jared Kushner to a small circle that includes Steve Bannon and Mike Flynn about the direction from then-candidate Trump, to clarify, you were not aware, other than what Mr. Kushner told you, of direction coming straight from Mr. Trump with regard to who can represent and meet with foreign governments on behalf of the campaign?

And the reason we ask is because it is -- it leads to an open question as to whether or not Mr. Papadopoulos, in engaging in this parallel track with the Egyptians at the same time or around the same time that you happened to be in Egypt and heard from the Egyptians, may have been part of this group that is authorized, either directly or authorized by virtue of being with Mr. Bannon, who may have been authorized to do so.

A Thank you for the question. To the best of my understanding, now that you added that information that I can connect with other information that I had -- I mean, had I not read this, I couldn't have been able to answer the way I can.

But still, already in the summer after the convention, even putting this aside, I knew that I was not -- and I released this to the Senate, by the way, just to make this clear -- I was not part of the New York policy team that made those communications.

So I reserved myself to media, which they seemed to be very happy with. Contact with diplomats I did not initiate. Basically I was asked to come and

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explain. The only time I initiated in Egypt was not about the campaign. I wanted to discuss with the religious leader of Egypt how can we make the distinction between extremism and other stuff.

So my answer to you is, I've heard from Mr. Kushner that the candidate, Mr. Trump, doesn't want us, including me perhaps, to meet with governments and then promise and then engage. That I've already known.

He emphasized in September, I know now why most likely, because of two things. Number one, I went to Egypt. The Egyptians asked me. It reverberated back to Bannon. And I spoke with Flynn. So they got together and they said, what is Walid Phares doing there? One.

Two, there is another reason that Mr. Kushner mentioned, and I understand that, is that not knowing that this was happening, I asked Ivanka if she likes the idea of her going to the Middle East and meeting with women, with Muslim women, because the image of our candidate was very negative, et cetera.

So she told him and he -- then that prompted the call. And he insisted, Dr. Phares, you know, do not speak on behalf of the campaign. And I told him I was not, I explained to him what was happening, and I won't.

Q Okay. Thank you.

We talked at length about Mr. Papadopoulos. And apologies if this was covered, but I just want to make sure that we leave nothing on the table.

Can you describe, to the extent that you are aware, your knowledge of Carter Page's activities and travel? Because, as has been publicly reported, Carter Page traveled to Moscow during the campaign period, spoke at a university publicly.

In testimony to this committee that has been released publicly, he

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acknowledged having interactions, at least, with various high-level individuals, and then he put it in writing. And those, what is in the transcript that is public, has the information of what he played.

To the extent that either you directly or through your conversations with Tera Dahl, with Sam Clovis, with J.D. Gordon, others, to what extent were you aware of what Mr. Carter Page was doing, where he was going, and how that was being perceived?

A To the best of my recollection assessment, because now going back in history I'll have to take into account what I knew then and what I know now -- famous saying -- when Carter Page spoke to us in general or even in that happy hour lunch after the meeting with the group, he didn't communicate with me what he was actually doing in details.

Half of his conversation with me was to criticize the other camp, call it ranting, call it what.

Q Yeah.

A And he was -- I mean, the content of what he was talking about was intellectual. I mean, he would take one point and another and criticize.

I learned more about his trips from the media later and from him when he testified.

So just to emphasize that when we heard from him, it was more about criticizing the other camp, and sometimes also, I don't want to say criticize, but complaining that our camp was not doing enough in that direction.

██████████ One minute.

BY █████

Q Thanks.

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These are standard questions we've been asking others.

A Sure.

Q And your description of how your role changed and what you may have been aware of and what email chains you were on is very helpful.

The first is the hack of the DNC and the release of the DNC's emails through WikiLeaks and through several other cutouts or front personas, one being named as Guccifer 2.0, another one being DCLeaks.

To what extent did you become aware of those developments? And what conversations did you have or can you recall hearing from others about these developments?

A The best of my recollection regarding all this, all these subjects is I learned about them in the media. I don't recall anybody reporting to me directly about direct knowledge about these matters during the campaign.

[REDACTED] That's time.

[REDACTED] Thanks.

[REDACTED] Would you like a break?

MR. PHARES: I am good.

[REDACTED] You are good.

Another 15.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Thank you.

So just to be clear, you don't recall conversations or impressions of what others may have been focused on or discussing from either the foreign policy advisory team or perhaps even any individuals from the campaign in New York about -- so the first question would be the hack of the DNC.

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And secondly would be the distribution of the emails, so the dissemination of the emails publicly. And that happened in waves during the final weeks of the campaign, of the election. Is that correct?

A Yes. I don't -- I have a recollection as far as I can think now, remember, of any direct knowledge about those.

Q So just to walk through the timeline, because part of it also occurs around the same time as the convention that you were present for.

A Okay.

Q So on June 14th, 2016, the DNC announces publicly that it has been the victim of an attack by Russian hackers.

A Uh-huh.

Q The next day, on June 15th, Guccifer 2.0 claims credit for hacking into the computer system of the Democratic National Committee, the DNC.

That same day, on June 15th, a cybersecurity firm hired by the DNC publicly attributes the attack on the DNC systems to groups associated with Russia's security apparatus. In this public post online, this cybersecurity firm named CrowdStrike —

A Crowd?

Q CrowdStrike is the name of the company. They assert that two Russian-backed groups called, quote/unquote, Cozy Bear and Fancy Bear tunneled into the computers -- sorry, the committee's computer systems.

Over the course of then several days, Guccifer 2.0 begins to leak some information publicly. For example, on June 18th, Guccifer 2.0 publishes hacked DNC documents including financial reports and donors' personal information. June 21st, they publish a dossier on Hillary Clinton compiled by the DNC.

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And then we come closer to the RNC. And I'm only describing a sample of each case. The RNC Convention from the 18th to the 21st of July, the day after that, so on July 22nd, another actor, this time WikiLeaks, releases nearly 20,000 stolen DNC emails containing more than 8,000 attachments, and these are emails that cover more than a year worth of information.

And several days later, on the campaign trail, then-candidate Trump calls on Russia, this is on July 27th, in what became a very well-known public statement, he said, quote, "I will tell you this. Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing."

Trump said at a news conference -- this is what he said at a news conference, quote, "I think you will probably be rewarded mightily by our press."

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[2:27 p.m.]

BY [REDACTED]

Q The reason why I go through this timeline is it was happening concurrently with other campaign-related events, possibly interactions you may have had with certain campaign officials, and what we are interested in knowing is to what extent there may have been knowledge about these developments, to what extent -- how these developments were viewed, and to what extent there was use of the information that was hacked for campaign-related purposes.

So possibly to denigrate the other candidate, Hillary Clinton, to promote certain themes about that candidate, to contrast that with then-Candidate Trump.

Given all this, we would be very interested in hearing, to the extent that you may be aware of, how this was reverberating in the circles that you were involved in.

A Thank you for the question. To the best of my recollection, first of all, from all the information that you have mentioned I wasn't even following, because my concerns were in different areas. But one thing I remember, when candidate Trump made that statement calling on the Russians. And I don't know how to analyze it, because I'm not a speechwriter. That I remember vividly, that event.

I don't have a recollection that myself or the people with whom I worked we had discussions, unless somebody mentioned it or said, look what's happening, either on TV or in other form, on email. I don't have a recollection of that matter.

Q Okay, thank you. Are you aware of a trip that Donald Trump Jr. took to Paris in, I believe it may have been -- I will get the exact date, but there was a trip that Donald Trump Jr. made to Paris to speak in an event by a group named

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the Center for Political and Foreign Affairs. It was in early October of 2016. Are you aware of this trip?

A I'm vaguely remembering that it was in the news somewhere, but I don't remember any detail about it.

Q Do you know who a person named Fabien Baussert or, in French, Fabien Baussert is?

A Fabien Baussert? That name, I may have heard that name, but it doesn't bring me any recollection. Is he a lawyer?

Q He is married to a woman named Randa Kassis.

A That is from my region. The best of my recollection now is the names are not totally alien to me, but I don't recall where did I see him, see the names or else.

Q So the public reporting on this trip suggests that this organization, the Center for Political and Foreign Affairs, as well as the Movement for a Pluralistic Society --

A Movement for?

Q A Pluralistic Society. Invited Donald Trump Jr., the son of then-candidate Trump, in October, to speak in Paris, and this organization's primary focus until then had been on the Syria conflict.

A Of the Syria conflict. Okay.

Q Yes. So the Movement for a Pluralistic Society has been reported in the press at least to be, quote/unquote, "close to Russia," and there are questions about whether or not it also has either sympathies for or even possibly contacts with the regime of Bashar Assad. Does any of this ring a bell to you?

A Yes. The more we review, the more my memory starts to shed light

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on -- on one name, Randa Kassis. That name, I can't tell you anything at this point in time because I don't recall, but that name came in the sphere of those who dealt with Syria, and I could check if you want for later to see if it's the sphere of Assad. That's why I was -- when you mentioned the name, I have heard that name. But this is something I cannot report now.

Q Okay. That would be very helpful if you can. But just to be clear, so, other than the press reports, you were not aware of travel by Donald Trump Jr. to Paris for this or any other purpose?

A I wasn't aware of any of his travel, including this one.

Q Okay. There has been public reporting on what occurred during this trip and how much Mr. Donald Trump Jr. was paid. Given your career, your public speaking role, your travel abroad on behalf -- to lecture or to speak at conferences, has it been your experience that speakers are compensated for appearing at an event sponsored by think tanks?

A Yes. To my recollection, it depends. People like myself, scholars, academics, former government people, are often contracted by think tanks, foundations, to receive an honorarium and to deliver a lecture.

But there is also the case whereby high-profile people who want to deliver the lecture not for monetary purposes, you know, are not paid.

Q Right.

A So it depends on the cases.

Q And generally, what is your understanding of what the going rate would be for someone who does receive an honorarium?

A To the best of my assessment, it's very difficult to give a rate, because the rates are so wide. What we call -- and excuse the way we're going

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to put it -- the Bill Clinton rate or Gates rate, these are a lot of zeros, to, if people are like scholars, advanced scholars, somewhere between \$5,000, \$10,000 should be an acceptable rate.

Q So the public reporting suggests at least that Donald Trump Jr. was paid -- was offered \$85,000 for the speech. Would you view that rate, in light of the spectrum of payment that you described, as being extremely generous?

MR. SOCARRAS: At this point, I'd like to jump in and say if the minority would like to put Dr. Phares on contract as an analyst, I'm sure he'd be happy to help out, but at this point you're going beyond his knowledge. This is opinions.

BY [REDACTED]

Q Of course, it's purely opinion. We're taking it as such. It is merely because he has worked in that field. I can only speak for myself, but I'm not aware of the going rate, although I'm hoping it's lucrative maybe one day.

So yes, just generally speaking?

A For scholars --

Q And with all the caveats you may want to add.

A Well, all the caveats were added by my lawyer. I would add that this is purely assessment, if not speculation. But I can answer the question, offer to answer the question, is that for usual scholars, even advanced scholars, this would be too high. I mean, no professor or head of think tank will get more than maybe \$20,000, regardless of who the person was.

This is a high-profile rate, which I call the Bill Clinton, and maybe now in this case you're informing me that these are the rates that are given to international, internationally recognized political figures.

Q Okay. Let me just check with my colleague.

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[REDACTED] One minute.

[REDACTED] If I can yield back and maybe just have 1 minute to consult with my --

[REDACTED] Of course. Why don't we take a couple minutes and circle back.

[Recess.]

[REDACTED] Back on the record. Minority for 15 minutes.

BY [REDACTED]

Q So I only have a few cleanup questions. This has to do with others on the campaign. Did you have any interaction with Roger Stone during the campaign?

A To the best of my recollection, none.

Q Did you know Roger Stone prior to joining the campaign?

A I haven't met him or spoken to him before.

Q Have you met or spoken to him since and, if so, did you discuss matters related to the campaign?

A I haven't met or spoken to Mr. Stone since.

Q During your tenure on the campaign, did you interact with Paul Manafort or Rick Gates at all?

A Let me begin with Manafort. From my recollection, I saw group emails where his name was mentioned, but it wasn't a campaign email, so I cannot talk to that. I met him -- no, I meant I saw him one time in the greeting room of a TV station, 400 North Capitol. And I came to him and we shook hands and then exchanged a couple words, and that was it. I didn't see him after that.

Q This is during the campaign period?

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A Yes, including when he was a manager -- co-chair.

Q Okay.

A And Rick Gates?

Q Yes.

A No, I never met -- I may have seen him, but I didn't recognize him, who he was.

Q And were you ever made aware of any discussions about Paul Manafort or Rick Gates or Roger Stone, for that matter, by others on the campaign as it related to foreign policy?

A All right. So, number one, to the best of my recollection, I haven't heard any conversation or been part of a conversation regarding Mr. Stone.

Regarding Mr. Manafort, number one, I saw his name in a trail of emails, you know, Rick Dearborn, others in New York. And during those 2 weeks when I served, I did. And even after those 2 weeks, in those DonaldTrump.com emails, at times I will see his name, but I have not had a conversation about an ongoing initiative he was taking. I must have been excluded from it.

Q Okay. The same set of questions with regard to Stephen Miller. You mentioned him briefly. If you can expand on what either your interaction was with him or what your understanding was of his role on foreign policy matters?

A Okay. Stephen Miller, the best I can recollect was I saw him the first time after I was appointed. I didn't know him before. The first time I was appointed, we were also at that studio, TV studio, 400 North Capitol. He finished his interview. I finished my interview. We were leaving the building, and he came and shook my hand and he said, well, you are one of the advisers now. And I told him, why don't we speak a little bit about the campaign. That was in the

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early -- the early time, probably end of March or early April. And then I haven't seen him or engaged with him.

But during the 2 weeks when I was at the office, he was actively engaged with us, with Rick Dearborn and us on email, mostly the campaign email, but at some time I saw his name in the private email. And it was about assessing items, various items. The one I can remember was he would send us portions of foreign policy speech or statement to be made, and each one of us in their field if we have any input. So we had that.

Q And the circumstances surrounding the meeting with the Egyptian President in late September of 2016, you mentioned Mr. Bannon, George Papadopoulos, Mr. Flynn being involved. Are you aware of Stephen Miller's involvement in that respect and possible interaction with Mr. Papadopoulos as part of that?

A I don't have a recollection about Mr. Miller being in that phase, the chapter of dealing with Egypt. I don't recollect. But I may be wrong if I see documents.

Q These are also part of our standard questions. But were you ever made aware of what has been publicly reported since, a meeting that Donald Trump Jr., Paul Manafort, and Jared Kushner had with a delegation from Russia that was led by a lawyer named Natalia Veselnitskaya at Trump Tower?

A To the best of my recollection, I had no information about that meeting.

Q Okay. We spoke briefly about this quote by President Trump where he was addressing Russia publicly about Hillary Clinton's emails. There has been other reporting about other purported efforts to secure either lost or stolen material

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or emails from Hillary Clinton.

Was that a subject matter that you ever became aware of or have knowledge of through the course of your time on the campaign in discussions with individuals in the campaign or around the campaign?

A To the best of my knowledge, I don't have any recollection of that subject being discussed in my presence. The only time I learned about it was from the media.

Q These final questions are similar but more specific than questions that my colleagues around the aisle asked you about any activity you may have conducted or anybody who may have approached you. But during the campaign, did you ever provide any individual with any information related to Hillary Clinton or any other political candidate or party? Let me rephrase that.

Did you ever provide any individual that you may have known was linked to the Russian Government or had a relationship with the Russian Government in any way with any information related to Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump?

A To my recollection, no.

Q Are you aware of anybody who provided information to the Russian Government or an agent of the Russian Government during the campaign?

A To my recollection, no.

Q During the campaign, did you ever receive information about Hillary Clinton or any other individual related to the Democratic party or Clinton's political campaign from an unidentified source or a source you were not familiar with, either by email, by text message, by phone call, by other private direct message?

A Clarification.

Q Please.

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A That somebody would have sent a loaded email to my website, I have no control knowing, and sometimes it will go into the trash. That is not what you're talking about?

Q No. It's to what extent are you aware or do you have knowledge of receiving any information?

There have been public reports about contacts via direct message on Twitter, for example, or by unsolicited email, or an approach in person where there may have been an offer of information. Are you aware of any of that that may have occurred with you?

A Yes. On Twitter or any direct messaging way, I have not received any of the messages you are mentioning. And to the best of my recollection, I don't recall having received such messages through a website or even direct contact.

Q And in the course of your time on the campaign, did you ever gain knowledge of or hear from others on the campaign who may have discussed having been approached themselves by a third party claiming to have information of value to the campaign that may in some way relate to Hillary Clinton?

A To the best of my recollection, I do not remember hearing from others that either they know or they had received information that would be detrimental to Secretary Clinton during my tenure during the campaign.

[REDACTED] I think that concludes the minority's questions.

[REDACTED] Dr. Phares, thank you. The committee certainly appreciates the time you spent here with us today.

And, with that, we're adjourned.

MR. PHARES: Thank you very much.

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[Whereupon, at 2:50 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

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